THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE WORKS OF MOLIERE.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

A NEW TRANSLATION.

BERWICK:

PRINTED FOR R. TAYLOR.

MDCCLXXI.

PQ
1825
E5T3
v.2

THE

ROMANTIC LADIES.

A

COMEDY.

1140787

The ROMANTIC LADIES, *a Comedy of One Act, acted at Paris, at the Theatre of the Little Bourbon, the 18th of November, 1659.*

THE comedy of the ROMANTIC LADIES deſerves to be ranked among the beſt of Moliere's performances, although it is not one of the beſt with regard to the plot. He ventured, in this piece, to forſake the common path of complicated intrigues, to lead us in a comic road, firſt known by him. The main end of a good comedy appeared to him to be, to criticiſe the follies and manners which were peculiar to his time.

THE paſſion for wit, or rather the abuſe they made of it, was a kind of contagious malady then in faſhion. The forced bombaſt ſtyle in romances, which the women admired for the very reaſons which have ſince diſcredited thoſe works, had got into converſation: In a word, both the quality and common people were affected; and at this conjuncture did the comedy of the ROMANTIC LADIES make its appearance; never was greater ſucceſs known; the prodigious number of ſpectators made the company demand double prices at the ſecond repreſentation of it, and the piece run for four months together: It produced a general reformation, people ſaw themſelves in it, laughed, and gave the trueſt applauſe to it by forſaking their folly. Mr. Menage, who aſſiſted at the firſt repreſentation, ſaid to Chapelaine, "You and I both "approved of all theſe follies which have been now "ſo excellently and ſo ſenſibly criticized; believe "me, we muſt burn what we have admired, and "admire what we have burnt." This acknowledg-

ment was only the reflection of a man of sense who found himself undeceived; but the saying of an old man, who in the middle of the pit cried out through instinct, "Take courage, Moliere, "this is a good comedy," is the pure expression of nature, which shews how much the human mind is swayed by truth.

ACTORS.

La Grange.
Du Croisy.
Gorgibus, a rich Citizen.
Magdalen, Daughter of Gorgibus. } The Romantic Ladies.
Cathos, Niece of Gorgibus. }
Marot, Maid to the Romantic Ladies.
Almanzor, Valet to the Romantic Ladies.
Marquis de Mascarille, La Grange's Valet.
Viscount Jodelet, Du Croisy's Footman.
Lucilia. } Neighbours to Gorgibus.
Celimene. }
Two Chairmen.
Fidlers.

SCENE Paris, in Gorgibus's house.

THE

ROMANTIC LADIES.

SCENE I.

LA GRANGE, DU CROISY.

DU CROISY.

MR. La Grange.

La Grange. What?

Du Croisy. Look at me a little without laughing.

La Grange. Well, I do look at you.

Du Croisy. What think you of our visit? —— are you pleased with it?

La Grange. Why, do you think we have any reason to be so?

Du Croisy. Indeed, I think we have not much.

La Grange. For my part, I own to you, that I am quite shocked at it.——Pray now, did ever any body behold a couple of foolish gypsies give themselves such airs as these, or two men treated so insolently as we have been?—They could hardly condescend to order chairs for us.—— I never saw such whispering as there was between them; such yawning, such rubbing of eyes, and enquiring so often what o'clock it was. Besides, we could get them to say nothing but yes or no to all

we could say to them. In short, it must be confessed, that if we had been the greatest scoundrels in the world, they could not use us worse than they have done.

Du Croisy. I think you seem to take it much to heart.

La Grange. I do, and am determined to revenge myself for this impertinence.——I know well enough the reason of their slighting us. The conceited air has not infected Paris only, but has extended its influence to the country towns, and our ridiculous nymphs have sucked in their share of it. In a word, they are a strange medley of coquetry and affectation. I plainly see what sort of persons are likely to meet with a favourable reception from them, and if you will trust me, we will play them a trick shall make them see their folly, and teach them to distinguish people a little better.

Du Croisy. How can this be done?

La Grange. I have an arch dog of a footman, named Mascarille, who passes for a sort of a wit, in the opinion of many people; for nothing now-a-days is cheaper than wit. This fellow has taken it into his head, forsooth, to set up for a person of quality. He usually values himself for intrigues and poetry, and despises other valets so much as to call them brutes.

Du Croisy. Well; what mean you to do with him?

La Grange. I will tell you. He shall——But let us retire; I will disclose my scheme to you as we go along.

SCENE II.

GORGIBUS, DU CROISY, LA GRANGE.

GORGIBUS.

WELL, gentlemen, you have ſeen my daughter and niece; how ſtand matters between you and them? What ſucceſs have you had from your viſit?

La Grange. That is a thing you may better learn from them than us. All we can ſay to you, is, that we return you thanks for the favour you intended us, and remain your moſt humble ſervants.

Gorgibus alone.] Hey-day! methinks they ſeem diſſatisfied! what can be the meaning of this? I muſt enquire. Soho there!

SCENE III.

GORGIGUS, MAROT.

MAROT.

DID you call, Sir?

Gorgibus. Yes, where are your miſtreſſes?

Marot. In their cloſet, Sir.

Gorgibus. What are they doing?

Morat. They are making lip-ſalve.

Gorgibus. Bid them come down.——[Alone.] Theſe huſſies, with their lip-ſalve, have, I think, a mind to ruin me. The houſe is filled with nothing but whites of eggs, nun's cream, and a thouſand other fooleries. They have uſed, ſince we came hither, the lard of a dozen hogs at leaſt; and four

ſervants might be daily fed with the legs of mutton they deſtroy.

SCENE IV.

MAGDALEN, CATHOS, GORGIBUS.

GORGIBUS.

THERE is great need, indeed, of all this time and expence to greaſe your muzzles.——Inform me, pray, how you have behaved to theſe gentlemen, that I ſaw them go away with ſo much coldneſs. Did not I charge you to receive them as perſons that I intended for your huſbands?

Magdalen. Dear father, what regard would you have us pay to the irregular proceedings of theſe people?

Cathos. Dear uncle, can a woman of any taſte or faſhion be able to reconcile herſelf to men of their figure?

Gorgibus. What ſee you in them to find fault with?

Magdalen. Fine galantry of theirs, indeed!—— Would you believe it, Sir? they began with propoſing marriage to us.

Gorgibus. With what would you have them begin? with whoring?—Is not this a way of acting which both of you have reaſon to approve of as well as I? Can any thing be a greater ſign of their good intentions? And that holy tie they deſire, is it not a proof of the fairneſs of their deſigns?

Magdalen. O father! what you ſay is extremely like a citizen. I really bluſh to hear you deliver yourſelf in ſuch uncouth terms. Indeed, papa,

you ſhould learn to ſpeak with a more courtly air.

Gorgibus. I've nothing to do with your airs.—I tell you, that matrimony is an holy and a ſacred thing, and to begin with that is to act like honeſt people.

Magdalen. Lard! were the whole world like you, a romance would ſoon draw to a concluſion! what a fine thing it would have been if Cyrus had immediately married Mandana, and if Aronce had been eſpouſed in all haſte to Clelia!

Gorgibus. What is this ſhe talks of?

Magdalen. Sir, my couſin will tell you as well as me, that matrimony ought never to be brought about till after other adventures.——A lover who would make himſelf agreeable, ſhould begin his declaration with fine ſentiments, ſhort and paſſionate ſpeeches; and make his addreſſes in the neceſſary forms.——In the firſt place, he ſhould behold, either at church, or in the park, or at ſome public ceremony, the perſon of whom he becomes enamoured: or, elſe, he ſhould be fatally introduced to her by a relation or a friend, and go from her melancholy and penſive. He ſhould conceal his flame, for ſome time, from the beloved object, but, however, make her frequent viſits, at which ſome diſcourſe about galantry never fails to be brought upon the carpet to exerciſe the wits of the company——— When the time comes to make his declaration, which ſhould always be contrived to happen in ſome ſhady walk or arbour, while the company is at ſome diſtance in the garden; it ſhould be accompanied with a preſſing earneſtneſs, and ſudden ſtarts of paſſion, which gives occaſion for the fair one to exerciſe her rigour, and baniſh the too pre-

sumptuous lover, for some time, from her presence. He finds afterwards the way to pacify us, to accustom us insensibly to hear his passion, and to draw from us that confession which causes so much trouble.—Then follow the adventures; the rivals that thwart an established inclination, the persecutions of fathers, the jealousies arising from false appearances, the complainings, the running off with, and its consequences. This is the manner in which things are to be conducted according to the modes of taste; and these are the rules which no lover can dispense with observing in a polite courtship—But to come point blank to the conjugal union! to make no love but by making the marriage contract, and take a romance just by the tail! in short, dear father, nothing can be more mechanic than such a proceeding, and I am ready to faint at the very thoughts of it.

Gorgibus. What the devil of nonsense is this I hear? Where the pox did you learn this lofty stile?

Cathos. In short, uncle, my cousin tells you the truth of the matter. How is it possible to shew countenance to persons who are the very antipodes of all politeness? I will lay a wager they have never seen the map of tenderness, and that fond epistles, little disquietudes, polite letters, and sprightly verses are regions to them unknown. Do not you observe their whole person shews it, and that they have nothing of the air which gives one at first sight a good opinion of people?——And then to make a love-visit without a snuff-box! in a plain hat! a head with the locks irregular! and a habit indigent of embroidery!——heavens! what lovers are these! what a stinginess in dress! what a bar-

rennefs of converfation! it is over with them prefently, they keep it not up at all. I took notice likewife of the clumfinefs of their neckcloths, and the cut of their cloaths, which looked as if they were of the laft age.

Gorgibus. Zounds! I believe the girls are both mad! I do not know one word in ten they fpeak. Heark'e, Magdalen, and you, Cathos.

Magdalen. Ah! pray, father, leave off thefe ftrange names, they found fo horribly unfafhionable!

Gorgibus. Strange names! are they not your chriftian names?

Magdalen. Lard! how vulgar you are!——for my part, one thing I wonder at, is how you could be the father of a girl of my tafte and fpirit. Did you ever hear Cathos or Magdalen mentioned in genteel ftile? Why, one of thefe names is alone fufficient to fpoil the beft romance in the world.

Cathos. Really, uncle, an ear that is a little delicate fuffers extremely at hearing thefe words pronounced; and the name of Polixena, which my coufin has chofen, and that of Amintha which I give myfelf, have fomething fo inexpreffibly graceful, that—

Gorgibus. Heark'e,—there needs but one word. I do not know that you have other names than what were given you by your godfathers and godmothers; and as to the gentlemen in queftion, I am acquainted both with their families and their fortunes, and pofitively refolve that they fhall be your hufbands. I am tired of keeping you upon my hands, and the care of two fuch flirts as you are, is enough to make any fober man mad.

Cathos. For my part, uncle, all I can fay is, that

I think matrimony a mighty ſhocking thing. How can one endure the thought of lying by the ſide of a naked man? I am ready to faint at the thoughts of it?

Magdalen. Give us leave to take breath a little amongſt the beau monde of Paris, where we are but juſt arrived. Permit us to form the contexture of our romance at leiſure, and do not hurry on the concluſion in ſuch a manner.

Gorgibus aſide.] There is not the leaſt doubt of it; they are quite diſtracted. [Aloud.] Once more, I tell you, I comprehend nothing of all this nonſenſe, but I am reſolved to be obeyed. And, to cut ſhort all further diſputes, you muſt either determine to marry in a very ſhort time, or be ſhut up in a nunnery for life. So now you know my reſolution.

SCENE V.

CATHOS, MAGDALEN.

CATHOS.

LARD! my dear, how is thy father immerſed in matter! how groſs is his underſtanding! and how unenlightened his mental faculties.

Magdalen. What would you have, my dear? I am in confuſion for him.—I can hardly perſuade myſelf that I am indeed his daughter, but believe ſome adventure one time or other will happen to diſcover a more illuſtrious deſcent.

Cathos. Nothing ſo probable. And, for my part, I declare to you, couſin, when I conſider myſelf, I—

SCENE VI.

CATHOS, MAGDALEN, MAROT.

MAROT.

HERE is a footman asks if you are at home, and says, his master would come to see you.

Magdalen. Learn, creature, to express thyself with more delicacy. You should say, Ladies, an emissary attends below, to know if it is convenient for you to become visible.

Marot. Lord bless me! I do not understand your Latin, and hard words, not I,—I never studied sophophy, as you have done in Sirrus the Great.

Magdalen. Impertinent creature! how can this be endured!—Canst thou tell who is the master of this footman?

Marot. He told me it was the marquis de Mascarille.

Magdalen. Ah! my dear! a marquis, a marquis!—Well, go tell him we are visible.—This must certainly be a wit, who has heard of our arrival.

Cathos. Undoubtedly, my dear.

Magdalen. He must be received below in the palour rather than in our chamber; let us adjust our hair a little, and maintain our character.—— Come in hither quickly, and hold to us the counsellor of the graces.

Marot. O' my faith, I cannot tell what creature that is; you must talk to me like a Christian if you would have me understand you.

Cathos. Bring us the looking-glass, you ignorant wretch! and take care not to contaminate its

purity with the reflection of your groſs image.

[Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

MASCARILLE and two CHAIRMEN.

MASCARILLE.

HOLD, chairmen, hold. La, la, la, la, la, la—I think thoſe varlets have a mind to ſhake me to a jelly, by jumbling me againſt the walls and pavement.

1. Chairman. Ay, marry: becauſe the gate is narrow, and you would make us come quite in with you.

Maſcarille. I think ſo truly—Would you have me expoſe the delicacy of my features to the inclemency of the rainy ſeaſon, you raſcals, and let the dirt receive the impreſſion of my ſhoes?—begone: take away your chair.

2. Chairman. Then, pleaſe to pay us, Sir.

Maſcarille. Hem!

2. Chairman. Pleaſe to give us our money, Sir.

Maſcarille, giving him a blow.] Inſolent raſcal! to aſk a man of quality for money.

2. Chairman. Are poor people to be paid thus? and will your quality get a dinner for us?

Maſcarille. Ha, ha, ha, I ſhall teach you better manners than to ſtand parlying with a gentleman.

1. Chairman, taking one of the poles of his chair.] Come, pay us quickly.

Maſcarille. What!

1. Chairman. I ſay, I will have the money this moment.

Maſcarille. Oh! this man talks reaſon.

1. Chairman. Make haſte then.

Maſcarille. Ay, you ſpeak properly, for your part: but the other is a rogue that knows not what he ſays.—There: are you contented?

1. Chairman. No, I am not contented, you ſtruck my companion; and— [Holding up his pole.

Maſcarille. Hold, there, that is for the blow.—People may get any thing of me, when they aſk for it in a proper manner.—Well, vaniſh now, and call for me again to carry me to court.

SCENE VIII.

MAROT, MASCARILLE.

MAROT.

SIR, my miſtreſſes will come preſently.

Maſcarille. Pray do not let the ladies hurry themſelves, I am perfectly well ſituated to attend their leiſure.

Marot. They are here.

SCENE IX.

MAGDALEN, CATHOS, MASCARILLE, ALMANZOR.

MASCARILLE, after having ſaluted them.

LADIES, you will undoubtedly be ſurpriſed at the boldneſs of my viſit: but your reputation brings this unlucky affair upon you, and merit has for me ſuch potent charms, that I run every where after it.

Magdalen. If you are in queſt of merit, Sir, I am afraid you have miſtaken the ſpot.

Cathos. To find merit at our houſe, you muſt have brought it hither yourſelf.

Maſcarille. Ah! I engage to prove the contrary.——Fame has done juſtice to your deſerts, and you abſolutely *pique*, *repique*, and *capot* all that is polite in Paris.

Magdalen. Your complaiſance, Sir, makes you too liberal in your praiſes; my couſin and I ſhall endeavour not to give too much credit to your polite adulation.

Cathos. My dear, we ſhould call for chairs.

Magdalen. Here, Almanzor.

Almanzor. Madam.

Magdalen. Quick, quick, convey us hither the conveniencies of converſation.

Maſcarille. But hold, am I ſafe here?

Exit Almanzor.

Cathos. What do you mean?

Maſcarille. I fear ſome deſign againſt my heart, ſome attempt upon my freedom. Theſe eyes ſeem to me as if they took delight in triumphing over the ſufferings of an helpleſs heart.—What the duce! do they put themſelves upon their murdering guard as ſoon as one comes near them? Ah! by my faith, I am ſuſpicious of them, and muſt either ſcamper away, or expect city-ſecurity that they ſhall not do me miſchief.

Magdalen. My dear, how infinitely ſprightly he is!

Cathos. The very quinteſſence of wit and politeneſs.

Magdalen. Fear nothing, our eyes have no ill deſigns, and your heart may be well aſſured of their good behaviour.

Cathos. But, good Sir, be not inexorable to that

elbow-chair, which has so long extended its arms to embrace you.

Mascarille, adjusting himself at a glass.] Well, ladies, how do you like Paris?

Magdalen. Alas! what can we say of it? we must be the very antipodes to all taste and knowledge, not to confess that Paris is the grand cabinet of wonders, the center of good taste, wit, and galantry.

Mascarille. I think, for my part, that out of Paris there is no living for people of fashion.

Cathos. That is an indisputable truth.

Mascarille. 'Tis a little dirty; but then one has so many convenient chairs.

Magdalen. True; and a chair, I think, is a most sovereign protection against the insults of dirt and bad weather.

Mascarille. I presume you have abundance of visitors, ladies: What wits have you of your party?

Magdalen. Why really, my lord, we are scarcely known as yet, but I hope we shall be soon. A lady of our acquaintance has promised to bring several gentlemen, who write in the reviews, to visit us.

Cathos. And they, you know, are the sovereign arbitrators of all good things.

Mascarille. I will do your business better than any body; they all visit me, and I can say that I never rise without half a dozen wits about me.

Magdalen. Good heavens! we shall be obliged to you to the last degree if you will do us that kindness; for, in short, one must have the acquaintance of all these gentlemen, if one would be of the *beau monde*. It is these that influence repu-

tation at Paris; and in such a manner, you know, that only to keep them company is enough to occasion the report of one's being a critic, though there should be no other reason for it. But what I consider principally in such a connexion is, that by means of these ingenious visits, one is taught an hundred things which there is a necessity of knowing, and which are the quintessence of fine wit. One learns by it every day the little new galantries, the pretty correspondencies in prose or verse. One knows for certain, that such a person has composed the finest piece in the world upon such a subject; such a lady has made words to such a tune; this person has formed a madrigal upon enjoyment; that has composed stanzas on infidelity; Mr. Such-a-one wrote an ode of six lines yesterday evening to Mrs. Such-a-one, to which she sent him an answer this morning at eight o'clock; such an author engaged in such a subject; this writer is about the third part of his romance; that other is putting his works into the press.——In a word, this is what constitutes one a person fit to appear in the world.

Cathos. In short, I think it is excessively ridiculous, for a person to pretend to wit and not know even the least stanza that is made every day; and, for my part, I should be ashamed to shew my face, if any one should ask my opinion of a new piece, and I have not seen it.

Mascarille. It is a shame, indeed, not to have the first of whatever is composed; but do not be uneasy, I will establish an academy of wits at your house, and give you my word, not a rhime shall be made at Paris, which you shall not have by heart before any body else.——As for myself, such as you see me, I amuse myself in that way sometimes;

and you may see things of mine in all the witty female assemblies at Paris. Let me see;—aye, I have composed above two hundred songs, as many sonnets, four hundred epigrams, and more than a thousand madrigals, without reckoning riddles and lampoons.

Magdalen. I must acknowlege that I am furiously for lampoons; I think nothing is so gallant.

Mascarille. They are so, but they are very difficult to hit off, and call for a prodigious fund of wit; you shall see some of mine, that perhaps may not displease you.

Cathos. For my part, I am terribly fond of riddles.

Mascarille. They exercise the wit, and I have made four of them already this morning, which I will give you to guess the meaning of.

Magdalen. Madrigals are agreeable, when they are well turned.

Mascarille. That is my particular talent. Have you heard, ladies, that I am turning the whole Roman history into madrigals?

Magdalen. Ah! certainly, that must be incomparably fine; I bespeak one book at least, if you print it.

Mascarille. I promise each of you one, bound in the best manner. It was below my quality; but I do it only for the benefit of the booksellers, who are perpetually teazing me.

Magdalen. I fancy it is a great pleasure to see one's self in print.

Mascarille. Without doubt; but a-propos, I must tell you an extempore that I made yesterday at a duchess's, a friend of mine, whom I was visiting; for I am immoderately fond of an extempore.

Cathos. An extempore is certainly the touch-ſtone of wit.

Maſcarille. Will you honour me with your attention?

Magdalen. We do, with all our ears.

Maſcarille.

Oh! oh! quite off my guard was I;
Whilſt no harm thinking,
You
I view;
Slily your eyes
My heart ſurprize;
Stop thief, ſtop thief, ſtop thief, I cry.

Cathos. Ah! my ſtars! how exceſſively gallant!

Maſcarille. All I do is eaſy and genteel, I have nothing of the pedant in me.

Magdalen. Two thouſand leagues removed from any thing of that!

Maſcarille. Did you mind this beginning, "oh! oh!" this is extraordinary, "oh! oh!"—like a man that bethinks himſelf all at once, "oh! oh!"—The ſurprize, "oh! oh!"

Magdalen. Ay, I think that, "oh! oh!" is inimitable.

Maſcarille. And yet at firſt it ſeems nothing.

Cathos. Oh! my ſtars! what is that you ſay? Nothing! why it is ineſtimable; inexpreſſibly fine.

Magdalen. No doubt of it, and I ſhould like better to have made that "oh! oh!" than an epic poem.

Maſcarille. Egad, you have a good taſte.

Magdalen. Eh! I have not an exceeding bad one.

Mascarille. But do not you admire also, "quite off my guard was I;—quite off my guard was I," I minded nothing of the matter: a natural way of speaking, "quite off my guard was I."——"Whilst no harm thinking;" whilst innocently, without malice, like a poor sheep, "you I view;" that is to say, I amuse myself with considering, with observing, with contemplating you. "Slily your eyes" —What think you of the word "slily"? Is not it well chosen?

Cathos. Extremely so.

Mascarille. "Slily," cunningly, it seems as it were a cat coming to catch a mouse, "slily."

Magdalen. Nothing can be better.

Mascarille. "My heart surprize," snatch it away, force it from me; "Stop thief, stop thief, stop thief, stop thief." Would not you imagine a man were crying out and running after a thief to seize him? "stop thief, stop thief, stop thief, stop thief."

Magdalen. It must be acknowledged that there is an amazing deal of wit and sprightliness in this turn.

Mascarille. I will sing you the tune I have made to it.

Cathos. You have learned music?

Mascarille. I?—not at all.

Cathos. Is it possible?

Mascarille. People of quality know every thing, without ever learning any thing.

Magdalen. His lordship is quite in the right, my dear.

Mascarille. Hear if the tune be to your taste: hem, hem, la, la, la, la, la. The brutality of

the ſeaſon has furiouſly injured the delicacy of my voice:——but no matter, it is quite ungenteel to ſing well. [He ſings.] "Oh! oh! quite off my guard was I."—

Cathos. How tender and fine is the muſic! every one who have heard it, muſt certainly have expired.

Magdalen. It is ſomething in the cromatic taſte.

Maſcarille. Do not you find the thought well expreſſed in the tune, "ſtop thief, ſtop thief?" And then as if a body cried out violently, "ſtop, ſtop, ſtop, ſtop, ſtop, ſtop thief." Then all at once like a perſon out of breath,—"ſtop thief."

Magdalen. This it is to know the eſſence of things, the grand nicety, the nicety of niceties. I declare it is altogether an incomparable performance; I am quite enchanted with both air and words.

Cathos. I never yet met with any thing ſo ſtrong as this.

Maſcarille. All I do comes naturally to me, it is without ſtudy.

Magdalen. You are the darling of nature, I muſt ſay that for you.

Maſcarille. Well, ladies, how is your time engaged?

Cathos. We have nothing to do.

Magdalen. We have been here under a hideous abſtinence from diverſions.

Maſcarille. Will you permit me to wait on you to the play? a new comedy is to make its appearance to-night, and I ſhould be extremely happy to attend you to the firſt repreſentation.

Magdalen. There is no refuſing you any thing.

Maſcarille. But I beſeech you to applaud it well, when we ſhall be at it; for I am engaged to cry

up the performance; the author visited me this morning to beg me so to do.—It is the custom here for authors to come and read their new performances to us persons of quality, in order to engage us to approve of them, and give them a reputation; and I leave you to imagine, whether, when we say any thing, the pit dares contradict us.—For my part, I am, to the last degree, punctual in those things, and when I have made a promise to the poet, I am always sure to clap, and cry, bravo! before the candles are lighted.

Magdalen. Say no more of it, Paris is a wonderful place; an hundred things happen in it every day, which one knows not in the country, however witty one may be.

Cathos. It is enough; now we are told, we will do our part in crying out as we ought at every word that is said.

Mascarille. I cannot tell whether or not I am deceived; but methinks, by your looks, ladies, you should have written at least one play a-piece.

Magdalen. Eh! there may be something in what you say.

Mascarille. Ah! faith, we must see it.—Between ourselves, I have composed one which I will have acted.

Cathos. Ay! which company of actors will you give it to?

Mascarille. A fine question truly!—to the actors of the theatre-royal;—none but they are capable of gaining things a reputation; the rest know nothing, but speak their parts just as one talks: they do not understand to make the verses roar, or pause at a beautiful passage; how can it be known

where the fine lines are, if the actor does not stop at them, and apprize you thereby to clap?

Cathos. Really, there is a way of making an audience sensible of the beauties of a performance, and things are well esteemed but according as they are well set off.

Mascarille. How do you like this embroidery? is it well adapted to the cloaths?

Cathos. Perfectly.

Mascarille. The ribbon is well chosen.

Magdalen. Furiously well. It is an excellent plum colour.

Mascarille. What say you of my rollers?

Magdalen. They have an excellent air.

Mascarille. I may boast, however, that they are a quarter of a yard wider than any that have been made.

Magdalen. I must confess I never saw the elegance of dress carried to such a height.

Mascarille. These gloves too! tolerably well scented, ha? please to honour them with the reflexion of your smelling faculties.

Magdalen. They smell terribly fine.

Cathos. I never breathed an odour more agreeable.

Mascarille. And this here. [He gives them his powdered wig to smell too.]

Magdalen. It has the true quality odour; the sublime is most admirably blended with the soft.

Mascarille. You say nothing of my feathers: how do you like them?

Cathos. They are extravagantly handsome.

Mascarille. It cost me near ten guineas. It is my passion, you must know, to have all things a-la-mode, cost what they will.

Magdalen. You and I sympathize, I assure you; I am immoderately nice with regard to every thing I wear; and even to my very socks, I cannot endure any thing which is not made by the best hands.

Mascarille crying out suddenly.] O! o! o! gently, gently;——damme, ladies, this is very ill usage; I have reason to complain of your behaviour: this is not fair.

Cathos. For heaven's sake, what is the matter with you?

Mascarille. What! two at once upon my heart! to attack me thus right and left! Oh! it is against all law of nations! the combat is too unequal, and I must be obliged to call out for aid.

Cathos. It must be owned he says things in a particular manner.

Magdalen. He is a consummate wit.

Cathos. You are more afraid than hurt, and your heart complains before it is wounded.

Mascarille. The devil it does! I am certain I feel it pierced through and through! good God! how it bleeds!

SCENE X.

CATHOS, MAGDALEN, MASCARILLE, MAROT.

MAROT.

MADAM, there is one desires to speak with you.

Magdalen. Who is it?

Marot. The viscount Jodelet.

Mascarille. The viscount Jodelet?

Marot. Yes, Sir.

Cathos. Are you acquainted with him?

Mascarille. He is my best friend.

Magdalen. Conduct him in immediately.

Mascarille. It is some time since we have seen one another, and I am overjoyed at this lucky meeting.

Cathos. Here he is.

SCENE XI.

CATHOS, MAGDALEN, JODELET, MASCARILLE, MAROT, ALMANZOR.

MASCARILLE.

AH, viscount!

Jodelet. [Embracing one another.] Ah, marquis!

Mascarille. How happy am I to see you so unexpectedly!

Jodelet. How delighted am I to see you here!

Mascarille. Prithee, let me embrace thee once more.

Magdalen to Cathos.] We begin to be known, my dearest, see the beau monde find the way to our house.

Mascarille. Ladies, give me leave to present this gentleman to you, as a person worthy the honour of your acquaintance.

Jodelet. Ladies, justice forces me to offer that i cense which is so deservedly due to your merits, and those unparalleled charms call for adoration f m every sensible being.

Magdalen. This is to drive your civilities even to the borders of flattery.

Cathos. This day ought to be marked with a red letter in our almanack.

Magdalen to Almanzor.] Come, boy, muſt things be always told you over and over? do not you perceive that a chair is deficient?

Maſcarille. Do not wonder to behold the viſcount a little pale, he is but juſt recoved from a fit of illneſs.

Jodelet. It is the fruit of court attendance, and the fatigue of war.

Maſcarille. Let me tell you, ladies, that in the viſcount you behold one of the braveſt men of the age;——he is a perfect hero.

Jodelet. Nay, marquis, you are not ſecond to any man in that reſpect; every one knows you have done ſomething.

Maſcarille. It is true, we have ſeen one another upon occaſion.

Jodelet. And in places where it was very warm.

Maſcarille looking at Cathos and Magdalen.] Ay, but not ſo warm as it is here. Ha! ha! ha!

Jodelet. Our acquaintance began in the army, and the firſt time we ſaw each other, he commanded a regiment of horſe aboard the gallies of Malta.

Maſcarille. True, but you was in ſervice before me, and I remember I was only a cadet when you headed a company.

Jodelet. War is a fine thing; but, faith, the court now-a-days rewards people that are of ſervice like us very ill.

Maſcarille. And therefore my ſword ſhall reſt in its ſcabbard.

Cathos. For my part, I have a furious tenderneſs for men of the ſword.

Magdalen. I love them too: but I would have wit to temper bravery.

Mascarille. Do you remember, viscount, our storming the half-moon at the siege of Arras?

Jodelet. What do ye mean by an half-moon? it was a whole moon, indeed.

Mascarille. I believe you are right.

Jodelet. I ought, faith, to remember it very well; I was wounded in the right leg by a hand-grenade, of which I still carry the mark. Pray feel, ladies, what a cavity is here.

Cathos putting her hand to the place.] The scar is large indeed.

Mascarille. Your hand, if you please, madam. What do you think of this scar in the back part of my head? Do you feel it?

Magdalen. Ay, I feel something very hard.

Mascarille. It is a musket-shot which I received the last campaign I made.

Jodelet opening his bosom.] Here is a wound which went quite through me at the attack of Gravelin.

Mascarille putting his hand upon the button of his breeches.] I am going to shew you a terrible wound.

Magdalen. There is no occasion for it, we believe you without feeling it.

Mascarille. They are honourable marks, that shew what a man is made of.

Cathos. We do not in the least doubt the valour of either.

Mascarille. Viscount, have you your coach in waiting?

Jodelet. Why?

Mascarille. We will give the ladies an airing, and carry them to the jelly-shop.

Magdalen. We cannot go abroad to-day.

Mascarille. Let us have music then and dance.

Jodelet. Faith, that is well thought of.

Magdalen. With all our hearts. But we shall want more company.

Mascarille. Who is there?——Champagne, Picard, Bourgegnon, Casquarat, Basque, la Verdure, Lorrain, Provencal, Violette.——What is become of all my fellows?—I do not think there is a gentleman in France worse served than I. These rascals are always out of the way.

Magdalen. Almanzor, tell the servants of my lord marquis to go look for music, and run with our compliments to some of the neighbours, and tell them to people the desert of our ball with their presence. [Exit Almanzor.

Mascarille. Viscount, what say you of these eyes?

Jodelet. Why, marquis, what do you think of them yourself?

Mascarille. I? I say, that our liberty is furiously in danger; at least mine has suffered most violent attacks; and my heart hangs by a single thread.

Magdalen. How natural is all he says! he has such a pleasing manner of turning things!

Cathos. Really, he is most superabundantly lavish with his wit.

Mascarille. To shew you I am in earnest, I will make an extempore upon it. [He muses.

Cathos. O! I conjure you by all my soul holds sacred, let us have something made upon us.

Jodelet. I should be glad to do as much for you;

but the prodigious loſs of blood I have ſuſtained, has greatly exhauſted my poetic vein.

Maſcarille. Deuce take it! I always make the firſt verſe well, but I am perplexed about the reſt. Faith, this is a little too haſty, I will make you an extempore at my leiſure, which you will find to be the fineſt in the world.

Jodelet. How deviliſh witty he is!

Magdalen. His wit is gallant and finely turned.

Maſcarille. Viſcount, when did you ſee the counteſs?

Jodelet. It is above three weeks ſince I viſited her.

Maſcarille. Do you know that the duke came to ſee me this morning, and would have taken me into the country a ſtag-hunting with him?

Magdalen. Here come our friends.

SCENE XII.

LUCILIA, CELIMENA, CATHOS, MAGDALEN, MASCARILLE, JODELET, MAROT, ALMANZOR, and FIDLERS.

MAGDALEN.

LARD! my dears! we beg your pardon for the freedom we have taken in ſending for you in ſo abrupt a manner; but theſe gentlemen having propoſed to give us a dance, we ſent for you to fill up the vacuum of our aſſembly.

Lucilia. You have obliged us certainly.

Maſcarille. This is a kind of extempore ball; but one of theſe days we will give you one in form. Is the muſic come?

Almanzor. Yes, Sir, they are here.

Cathos. Come then, my dears, take your places.

Maſcarille dancing alone by way of prelude.] Tol lol derol derol lol.

Magdalen. How excellent a ſhape!

Cathos. Certainly he muſt dance nobly.

Maſcarille, having taken out Magdalen to dance.] Faith, ladies, I believe my freedom will preſently keep time with my feet. Play in time, fidlers, in time. O what ignorant wretches! there is no dancing with them. The devil take ye, cannot ye play in meaſure? Tol lol derol derol lol. Silence, ye country ſcrapers!

Jodelet, dancing afterwards.] Hold, do not play ſo faſt, I am but juſt recovered of a fit of ſickneſs.

SCENE XIII.

DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, CATHOS, MAGDALEN, LUCILIA, CELIMENA, JODELET, MASCARILLE, MAROT, and FIDLERS.

La Grange, with a ſtick in his hand.

SO, ſcoundrels! what do you here? we have been ſeeking you theſe three hours.

Maſcarille, feeling himſelf beaten] O! o! o! you did not tell me the blows ſhould be thus.

Jodelet. O! o! o!

La Grange. What! you ſet up for perſons of quality, do you?

Du Croiſy. This will teach you to know yourſelves.

SCENE XIV.

CATHOS, MAGDALEN, LUCILIA, CELIMENA, MASCARILLE, JODELET, MAROT and FIDLERS.

MAGDALEN.

PRAY, gentlemen, what is the meaning of this?

Jodelet. It is a joke, a wager.

Cathos. What, let yourſelves be beaten in this manner!

Maſcarille. Lard, I would not be ſeen to take any notice of it; becauſe I am violent, and ſhould have been guilty of ſome extravagance.

Magdalen. To ſuffer an affront like this in our preſence!

Maſcarille. It is nothing, I tell you.—Come, let us proceed. We have known one another a long time. They are two comical dogs. Why, if friends were to quarrel for a frolic, there would be no living.

SCENE XV.

DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, MAGDALEN, CATHOS, LUCILIA, CELIMENA, MASCARILLE, JODELET, MAROT, and FIDLERS.

LA GRANGE.

WE will let you know, raſcals, what it is to make a jeſt of us.

[Three or four bullies enter.

Magdalen. What means this impudence, to come and disturb us thus in our own house?

Du Croisy. What, madam, do you think we can tamely look on, and see our footmen better received by our mistresses than ourselves? and have the impudence to give them a ball at our expence?

Magdalen. Your footmen?

La Grange. Ay, our footmen; it is neither decent nor honest to encourage other people's servants to such insolence and extravagance.

Magdalen. O heavens! what impudence!

La Grange. But they shall not have the advantage of our clothes to dazzle your eyes; if you will love them, it shall be, faith, for their handsome looks. Quick, strip immediately.

Jodelet. Farewel finery.

Mascarille. The marquisate and viscountship are at an end.

Du Croisy. You impudent rascals! how dared you to set up for the rivals of your masters?

La Grange. It is too much to supplant us in our own cloaths.

Mascarille. O fortune! how fickle thou art!

Du Croisy. Quick, take every thing away from them.

La Grange. Carry away these clothes, begone with them. Now, ladies, you are extremely welcome to your new gallants in their present condition. As for this gentleman and myself, we promise you we shall not be jealous; and so leave you to finish your dance.

SCENE XVI.

MAGDALEN, CATHOS, JODELET, MASCARILLE, and FIDLERS.

CATHOS.

AH! what confuſion!

Magdalen. I burſt with vexation.

1. Fidler to Maſcarille.] Whati t he meaning of this? who is to pay us?

Maſcarille. Aſk the viſcount.

1. Fidler to Jodelet.] Who is to give us the money?

Jodelet. Aſk the marquis.

SCENE XVII.

GORGIBUS, MAGDALEN, CATHOS, JODELET, MASCARILLE, and FIDLERS.

GORGIBUS.

WELL, flirts! you have made fine laughing-ſtocks of yourſelves. The gentlemen have told me a curious trick of you.

Magdalen. Ah, father! we have been cruelly uſed.

Gorgibus. A trick with a vengeance! you may thank your own inſolence for it, you jades! I think your lovers have puniſhed you very properly for your treatment this morning—And here I muſt be laughed at for your folly and impertinence.

Magdalen. Ah! I ſwear we will be revenged, or I ſhall die with the vexation of it. And you,

rascals, dare you continue here after your insolence?

Mascarille. Do you use a marquis thus? This is the way of the world, the least disgrace makes us be slighted by those that before caressed us. Come, let us go and seek our fortune elsewhere: I see nothing but outside takes with this world; and now-a-days naked virtue goes unrewarded.

SCENE THE LAST.

GORGIBUS, MAGDALEN, CATHOS, and FIDLERS.

1. FIDLER.

SIR, we expect that you should pay us, since they do not, for it was here we played.

Gorgibus beating them.] Ay, ay, villains, I will pay you! but it shall be in this coin. And as for you, ye gipsies, I know not what prevents me from using you in the same manner. You have made both yourselves and me the jest of the town. Begone out of my sight for ever! [They go out.] And as for romances, verses, songs, sonnets, and sonatas, which have been the occasion of all this, may the devil fly away with them all.

THE END.

DON GARCIA

OF

NAVARRE:

OR, THE

JEALOUS PRINCE.

AN HEROIC COMEDY.

DON GARCIA

OF

NAVARRE:

OR THE

JEALOUS TRINCA.

A HEROIC COMEDY.

DON GARCIA *of* NAVARRE, *or the* JEALOUS PRINCE, *an Heroic Comedy of five Acts, acted at Paris, at the Theatre of the Palace-Royal, February 4th,* 1661.

THE choice of the subject, in imitation of the Spanish, in which the incidents are more suitable to comedy, than to any thing heroic; the original of which is vicious, and might be a means of the small success of this work. Moliere succeeded no better as an actor, when he played the part of Don Garcia. He did not appeal from the judgment of the publick, nor did he print his piece, though there were some passages in it, which he afterwards thought deserved to be inserted in other comedies, particularly in the MAN HATER; see the third scene of the fourth act of the MAN-HATER, and the eighth scene of the fourth act of DON GARCIA.

ACTORS.

DON GARCIA, Prince of Navarre, in love with Elvira.

ELVIRA, Princeſs of Leon.

DON ALPHONSO, Prince of Leon, thought to be the prince of Caſtile, under the name of Don Silvio.

AGNESA, a counteſs, in love with Silvio, beloved by Moorgat, the uſurper of the ſtate of Leon.

ELIZA, confident to Elvira.

DON ALVAREZ, confident of Garcia, in love with Eliza.

DON LOPEZ, another confident of Don Garcia, in love with Eliza.

DON PEDRO, gentleman-uſher to Agneſa.

A PAGE to Elvira.

SCENE lies in Aſtorga, a city of Spain, in the kingdom of Leon.

DON GARCIA

OF

NAVARRE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ELVIRA, ELIZA.

ELVIRA.

IN ſhort, I have no choice to determine the ſentiments of my mind concerning theſe two lovers; I can find nothing in the prince to induce me to prefer his love. Don Silvio poſſeſſes all the good qualities of a glorious hero as well as him. The equal birth of both, added to their noble virtues, often induces me to ſpeak in both their favours: and if merit alone were to plead a right to my heart, the conqueror would be yet unnamed—But heaven intends it otherwiſe, and weighs down the ſcale in Don Garcia's favour.

Eliza. Indeed, madam, as you have been ſo long in determining between the two rivals, I am afraid the love your ſtars have inſpired you with for him, has but a ſmall poſſeſſion of your ſoul.

Elvira. The love of theſe worthy rivals has gi-

ven me very great uneaſineſs. When I looked on the one, I found no reaſon to reſtrain my tender regard for him: but when the ſacrifice of the other preſented itſelf to me, I chid the former movement of my ſoul as an act of injuſtice, and thought Don Silvio deſerving of a happier fate. I conſidered the obligations which the late king Leon's daughter was under to the blood of Caſtile, and the ſtrong friendſhip which had long united the intereſts of his father and mine; and as the one gained my affection, the bad ſucceſs of the other gave me pain. When his melting ſighs demanded my pity, his deſires were amuſed with a favourable appearance, with which ſmall advantage he was willing to make amends for the ſecret difficulties he met with in my heart.

Eliza. You ſhould make yourſelf eaſy, ſince you have been made acquainted with his firſt paſſion. Donna Agneſa received the homage of his heart before he felt a paſſion for you; and as ſhe is your intimate friend, and has intruſted you with the ſecret, you have a good opportunity of freeing yourſelf, and may refuſe him under a pretence of friendſhip for her.

Elvira. Really the account of Don Silvio's infidelity may give me pleaſure, as it gives my weak heart liberty to determine againſt him, and I may with propriety refuſe his offers, and beſtow the feelings of my heart on another. But if the ſeverity of another ſort of conſtraint ſtill gives me pain, this ſatisfaction will not equal my uneaſineſs, when the continual weakneſs of a jealous prince unworthily receives my tender regards, and will certainly make me be obliged to drop all correſpondence with him.

Eliza. Can you blame him not to believe his happineſs compleat, when he is not yet aſſured of it from your own mouth? And is it not natural for that which gives hopes to his rival to make him ſuſpect your tenderneſs for him?

Elvira. No, there is no excuſe for the extravagance of his jealouſy; and he muſt ſee too plainly by my actions, that he has my ſecret good wiſhes. A perſon's thoughts may be interpreted by other ways than ſpeaking. A look, a bluſh, a ſigh, or even ſilence, is ſufficient to diſcover the ſentiments of one's heart. Every thing in love ſpeaks, and every ray is a ſun; as the delicacy of our ſex will not allow us to diſcover what we feel, I own I have endeavoured to divide my favours with an equal hand between them, and to look impartially upon the merits of both; but it is in vain to ſtrive againſt our wiſhes, and it is very eaſy to diſcern between favours which proceed from the ſincere inclination of the heart, and thoſe beſtowed out of policy. The one always appears forced, but the other natural; like pure and limpid ſtreams which flow from their native ſources calmly. In vain did my pity towards Don Silvio ſtrive to move me; the inſufficiency of it diſcovered itſelf, whilſt the prince muſt obſerve in my eye, more than I choſe he ſhould.

Eliza. If there is no foundation for the ſuſpicions of that illuſtrious lover, they are the ſigns of a well affected ſoul; and what makes you uneaſy would give others pleaſure. Jealouſy in a perſon who is diſagreeable to us, may give pain; but in an agreeable object who loves us, it ſhould give joy. He only expreſſes his paſſion in that manner, and the more his jealouſy appears, it ſhould

increaſe our love. Therefore ſince in your ſoul a brave prince———

Elvira. Ah! do not advance ſuch a ſtrange maxim; at all times and on all occaſions, Jealouſy is odious; nothing can ſoften its hurtful attacks, and we feel the affront more ſenſibly the dearer the object. To ſee a paſſionate prince laying aſide that reſpect with which love inſpires him, and in his jealouſies chiding my pleaſures and diſguſts, conſtruing every thing I do or ſay in favour of a rival! No, no, theſe ſuſpicious tempers are too offenſive; I will give you my opinion without deceit. I confeſs I love Don Garcia, and his bravery in the midſt of Leon has given me a proof of his flame, by defying the greateſt dangers, delivering me from the deſigns of wicked tyrants, and ſecuring me from the horrors of an unworthy match. I own, I would not wiſh to owe my deliverance to any other perſon. Indeed, Eliza, it gives great pleaſure to an enamoured heart to be under obligations to what it loves; and its fearful flame gains more ſtrength, and ſhines out ſtronger, when it imagines it ſatisfies its obligations by the means of favours. Yes, I am pleaſed that his venturing his life for me appears to give his love a right of conqueſt: it gives me pleaſure that my danger put me under his protection; and if reports are true, and my brother return, my ſincere wiſhes are, that he may aſſiſt my brother in the recovery of his throne, and that he may by lucky ſucceſſes of a noble valour deſerve all manner of thanks from me. Yet if his jealouſy does not ceaſe, and he do not ſubject himſelf to my laws, but continue to incite my anger, he will hope for the poſſeſſion of Donna Elvira in vain. I hate the appearance of certain

misery to both, and in that case Hymen can never join us.

Eliza. Madam, he is a prince that I dare say will conform himself to your desires, which you have explained so well in this letter, that when he reads it———

Elvira. Now, when I have thought better upon it, I will not have it delivered, Eliza; it will be better to inform him of my thoughts by word of mouth; to favour a lover with writing, leaves in his hands too clear proofs of our inclination.

Eliza. I should make a law of your inclination, but I am surprized that heaven should throw such diversity into people's minds. What some look upon as an hardship, others desire as a happiness. For my part, I should be glad to have a jealous lover; his misery would be joy to me, and what disappoints me is to see Don Alvarez so easy.

Elvira. Here he comes; we did not think he was so near.

SCENE II.

ELVIRA, DON ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

ELVIRA.

I Am amazed at your sudden return: are we to expect Don Alphonso? what is the news? is he coming?

D. Alvarez. Madam, the time is now come, when that brother brought up in Castile will enter into the possession of his own again. Don Louis, to whose care his infancy was committed by the late king, has concealed his quality from the whole state, to save him from the rage of that

traitor Mcorgat; and notwithſtanding the tyrant has often made enquiry for him, under the pretence of giving up his place to him, yet he would never truſt the dangerous bait of his ſham-juſtice. But as the people are enraged at that violence which would have been offered to you by an unjuſt power, that generous old man thought it high time to try the ſucceſs of twenty years expectation. He has ſounded Leon, and his faithful agents have practiſed upon the minds of both great and ſmall. When Caſtile was preparing ten thouſand men to reſtore that prince to the wiſhes of his people, he ſpreads his fame abroad, and ſhews him only at the head of an army, ready to launch the avenging thunder on the baſe uſurper's head. Leon is beſieged and Don Silvio commands in perſon the ſuccour you have from his father.

Elvira. A ſuccour ſo powerful may readily flatter our hopes; but I am afraid my brother will be under too great obligations to him.

D. Alvarez. Is it not ſurprizing, madam, that, notwithſtanding the ſtorm that threatens the uſurper, all reports from Leon confirm, that he is going to marry the counteſs Agneſa?

Elvira. I have heard nothing from that illuſtrious maid lately, which makes me uneaſy; ſhe always deteſted that tyrant. He endeavours to ſtrengthen his intereſt by an alliance with her.

Eliza. She is under other engagements of honour and affection, too powerful to—

D. Alvarez. The prince is coming.

SCENE III.

D. GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

D. GARCIA.

MADAM, I am come to rejoice with you at the good news you have received. That brother who threatens the infamous tyrant with death, at the ſame time gives hopes to my love, and offers me a welcome occaſion of expoſing myſelf to new dangers for your ſake. If heaven proves kind to me, this right hand ſhall lay the infidel dead at your feet, and reſtore your family to its former grandeur. And what gives me more pleaſure ſtill, is, that the ſtars have reſtored your brother to the throne; for ſo my love may ſhine out, without imputation, as if by means of your perſon, I only ſought to gain myſelf a crown. Yes, my heart would ſhew the world that my regards were for you alone; and I have a thouſand times wiſhed you in a humble ſtation, that the ſacrifice of my heart might repair heaven's injuſtice to you; and that you might be indebted to my love for all you owe to your birth. But as heaven has deprived me of that ſatisfaction, be ſo obliging as to let my love have ſome hope from his death whom I am preparing to meet, and allow me by my faithful ſervices to diſpoſe the minds of a brother, and a whole nation to be favourable to me.

Elvira. The favour of a brother, and of a nation are not enough to crown your hopes: I am ſenſible, that by eſpouſing our cauſe, you can make an hundred glorious exploits ſpeak in favour of your love.

Elvira is not the prize of that attempt, there is ſtill a greater difficulty to furmount.

D. Garcia. I know what you mean, madam, and am ſenſible that my heart ſighs in vain for you; and am not unacquainted with the mighty difficulty, though you do not mention it.

Elvira. People often take ill what is well meant. We may be led into miſtakes by too much heat: but ſince I muſt, I will ſpeak. Shall I tell you when you may expect to pleaſe me, and when you may have ſome hope?

D. Garcia. I would look upon that, madam, as a very great favour.

Elvira. When you know how to love as you ought.

D. Garcia. Alas, madam, can any thing equal the paſſion you have inſpired me with?

Elvira. When your paſſion does not diſpleaſe me.

D. Garcia. That is my only ſtudy.

Elvira. When you ſhall ceaſe to entertain unworthy thoughts of me.

D. Garcia. I love you to madneſs.

Elvira. When you have made amends for your offences, and laid aſide that jealous humour which hurts the addreſſes you offer to me, and prejudices me againſt them with juſt anger.

D. Garcia. Indeed, madam, ſtill ſome remains of jealouſy cleave to my heart, in ſpite of my beſt endeavours to prevent it; a rival, though at ſome diſtance from your charming perſon, does diſturb me. Whether through reaſon or fancy, I always imagine you are unhappy in his abſence, and that, notwithſtanding my aſſiduous behaviour to pleaſe you, you continually ſigh for that too happy man.

But if you are diſpleaſed at my ſuſpicions, it is in your power to eaſe me of them: Yes, you can drive jealouſy from my mind, and diſſipate all the horrors with which that monſter fills my ſoul. Submit therefore to reſolve the doubt that afflicts me, and with a kind confeſſion from your charming mouth, make me certain of what my greateſt diligence could not find out.

Elvira. The tyranny of your ſuſpicions is very great, prince. A heart ſhould be underſtood at the leaſt intimation, and does not love the importunity of thoſe flames which require ſuch particular explanations. The firſt movement which our ſouls diſcover ſhould ſatisfy a diſcreet lover. Were I to chuſe for myſelf, I do not know in whoſe favour I ſhould determine, whether your's or Don Silvio's: but the very deſiring to conſtrain you not to be jealous, might have given ſome information to any one but you; I thought that rule might have given light enough, without ſaying more; but your love is not ſatisfied, and requires an open declaration: I muſt ſay plainly, I love you, nay, perhaps ſwear to it.

D. Garcia. Indeed, madam, I confeſs I am too forward: I ſhould be ſatisfied with what you pleaſe, and require no other information; I flatter myſelf you have ſome ſmall compaſſion for me, and that I am happier than I deſerve. My jealous ſuſpicions are all over; my ſentence is very agreeable, and I receive the law thereby preſcribed to ſet my heart free from this unjuſt empire.

Elvira. You promiſe a great deal, prince, and I very much doubt whether you can put that force upon yourſelf.

D. Garcia. Ah! madam, to render me credible,

it is enough that what is promiſed to you ought to be inviolable; becauſe the happineſs of obeying you renders every thing eaſy. May heaven declare eternal war againſt me, may it lay me breathleſs at your feet, or which is worſe, may your wrath be poured on me, if ever my love deſcends to ſuch weakneſs as to fail in the duties of that promiſe; if ever the leaſt jealous tranſport in my ſoul—

SCENE IV.

ELVIRA, D. GARCIA, D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

[Footman preſenting a letter to Elvira.]

ELVIRA.

I WAS uneaſy, and you greatly oblige me: let the meſſenger ſtay.

SCENE V.

ELVIRA, D. GARCIA, D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

ELVIRA low and aſide.

I Plainly ſee by his looks how much this letter diſturbs him. Prodigious effect of his jealous mind! Prince, what ſtops you in the middle of your path? [Aloud.

D. Garcia. I was afraid of interrupting you, as I thought you might have ſome ſecret together.

Elvira. I think the tone of your voice is much changed, and your eyes look wild; I am amazed at this ſudden alteration; pray tell me from what it proceeds.

D. Garcia. I am ſick at heart ſuddenly.

Elvira. Are you often thus affected? Some imme-

diate remedy is needful; thoſe illneſſes are very frequent.

D. Garcia. Sometimes.

Elvira. Alas, frail prince! here let this writing cure your diſtemper, it is no where but in the mind.

D. Garcia. That writing, madam! no, my hand refuſes it: I know your thoughts, and what you accuſe me of, if—

Elvira. Read it, I tell you, and ſatisfy yourſelf.

D. Garcia. That you may afterwards call me weak, jealous; no, no, I will convince you that this letter has not in the leaſt diſturbed me, and to juſtify myſelf, I will not read it, though you are pleaſed to allow me.

Elvira. If you perſiſt in your refuſal, I ſhould be in the wrong to force you; it is ſufficient I let you ſee whoſe hand it is.

D. Garcia. My will ought always to ſubmit to yours; if it is your pleaſure I ſhould read it for you, I ſhall do it very willingly.

Elvira. Yes, yes, prince, take it; you ſhall read it for me.

D. Garcia. To obey you, madam; and I may ſay——

Elvira. What you pleaſe; pray diſpatch.

D. Garcia. It comes from Donna Agneſa, I perceive.

Elvira. It does ſo; and I am glad of it, as well for your ſake as my own.

D. Garcia reads.] "Notwithſtanding all con-
"tempt, the tyrant perſiſts in his love to me; and
"more effectually to compaſs his ends, has, ſince
"your abſence, turned on me all that violence
"with which he purſued the match between your-

" ſelf and his ſon. Thoſe who can claim any pow-
" er over me do all approve this unworthy pro-
" poſal, being inſpired by the villainous motives
" of falſe honour. I do not know as yet where
" my perſecution will end. But I will die ſoon-
" er than conſent. May you, fair Elvira enjoy a
" happier fate."

D. AGNESA.

Her ſoul is endued with a ſurpriſing virtue.

Elvira. I will go and write an anſwer to this il-luſtrious friend. In the mean time, prince, learn to arm yourſelf better againſt ſuch accidents. I have calmed your tempeſt this time, and the thing has paſt mildly off: but, perhaps, I may not be in a humour to do ſo again.

D. Garcia. What? you think then———

Elvira. I think what I ought: farewel, do not forget my advice; and if your love of me be real-ly ſo great as you pretend, let me ſee ſuch proofs of it as I expect.

D. Garcia. Be aſſured, that I intend nothing more than to obey you; and I would ſooner die than fail in it.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ELIZA, D. LOPEZ.

ELIZA.

TO be plain with you, I am not ſurprized at what the prince does; as a ſoul fired with a noble paſſion cannot avoid being tranſported with jealouſy ſometimes; it is very natural that its wiſh-

es be often croſſed by doubts, and I muſt think well of it; but what I am amazed at, Don Lopez, is to be acquainted that you prepare ſuſpicions for him, that you contrive them, and he is only jealous with your eyes, and diſturbed by your cares. Really I muſt tell you again, that I am not ſurprized at the anxieties and ſuſpicions of a ſincere lover, but to ſee a perſon who is not in love have all the jealouſies of a real admirer, is a very particular caſe, which belongs only to you.

D. Lopez. Let every body talk upon that ſubject as they pleaſe: every man muſt rule his conduct by what he propoſes to himſelf; and as you reject my love, I muſt endeavour to make my beſt court to the prince.

Eliza. But if you ſtill encourage this temper in him, he will make his court very ill.

Don Lopez. My charming Eliza, was it ever known that people about great men ever ſtudied any thing but their own intereſt? Was there ever a compleat courtier increaſed his prince's retinue by cenſuring the faults he ſaw in them, or give himſelf concern for their real intereſt, in caſe he could enlarge his fortune by them? All ſuch people aim at is to get the eaſieſt way to their favour, which they may eaſily do by flattering their infirmities, and blindly commending what they chuſe to do, and never encouraging any thing that may give them offence; that is the whole ſecret of getting into their favour. If a man give them good advice he is looked upon as a troubleſome fellow, and will be thrown out of that confidence which he got into by an artful compliance. Really, we ſee that the art of courtiers is to make their advan-

tage of the follies of the great, not to reprove, but encourage them in their errors.

Eliza. For a time those maxims may answer, but there are such things as reverses of fortune. If the mistaken great ones see into their error, they will be revenged on all such fawners for the injury done their honour; and I must tell you, that you are too free in explaining your politics. If a just account of your reasons were laid before the prince, I am afraid your fortune would not be made by it.

D. Lopez. I know very well Eliza's discretion will prevent her from making this conversation public; and I can deny all I have said: besides, every body knows what I have said to be true, and why should I keep my proceedings private? When we make use of tricking or treason, we may be afraid of a fall; but I can be accused of nothing but a little complaisance, and need fear nothing. I only follow the prince's inclination to jealousy: his soul is fed by suspicions, and I study to find occasions to give him uneasiness, and look sharp out on all sides for matter to make up our private conversation. And when I have it in my power to disturb his quiet by a piece of news, then he regards me most, and I can observe him swallow the poison eagerly, and be as thankful for it as for the account of a victory, that crowned him with honour and happiness. But I see my rival coming, and I will leave you together; and notwithstanding I give up all hopes of ever possessing you, yet your giving him the preference, in my presence, would give me pain; therefore I will avoid that mortification as much as I possibly can.

Eliza. All sensible lovers will do the same.

SCENE II.

D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

D. ALVAREZ.

WE are at last informed that the king of Navarre has declared himself this day in favour of the prince's love, and that a fresh reinforcement of troops is ready to be employed in the service of her to whom he wishes to aspire. I am surprized at the quick advances they have made. But—

SCENE III.

D. GARCIA, ELIZA, D. ALVAREZ.

D. GARCIA.

WHAT is the princess doing?

Eliza. I suppose she is writing letters, my lord; but I will acquaint her that you are here.

D. Garcia. I will wait till she is at liberty.

SCENE IV.

D. GARCIA alone.

WHEN the prospect of seeing her is so near, I feel my mind uncommonly disturbed; resentment and fear makes me tremble all over. Take care, D. Garcia, that a blind caprice do not lead thee to some precipice, and the strong disorders of thy mind betray thee into too assured a belief of thy senses. Take thy reason for thy guide, and observe whether the appearance of thy suspicions are

well grounded; do not refuse their voice, but take care they do not impose upon thee to put too much confidence in them, that they may not give too much into thy first transports: read again sedately this half letter. Ha! I would give any thing for the other half! But this is more than sufficient to shew me that I am unfortunate.

If your rival—
you should however—
and you may destroy—
the greatest obstacle—
I gratefully remember—
in delivering me from—
his love, his devoirs—
but he is despicable to me with—
purge therefore your flame from—
merit the regards that are—
and when you are promised—
do not absolutely refuse—

Yes, in these characters, my fate is very plain; by this she shews her heart as well as hand; and the imperfect meanings of these fatal words do not require the other half to discover it. We must at first, however, carry it fair, and not discover our resentment to the faithless woman: we will puzzle her with the same arts she uses. I see her approaching; reason, contain my transports, and guard my outward appearance for a short time.

SCENE V.

ELVIRA, D. GARCIA.

ELVIRA.

FORGIVE me for detaining you.

D. Garcia low and aſide.] How eaſily ſhe can diſſemble!

Elvira. We have been informed juſt now, that the king your father approves of your intentions, and has conſented that his ſon ſhould reſtore us to our ſubjects. It gives me great pleaſure.

D. Garcia. Yes, madam, I am alſo very glad of it: but—

Elvira. Undoubtedly the tyrant will not eaſily ſcreen himſelf from the thunder that threatens him from all parts; and I pleaſe myſelf with hoping that the ſame bravery with which I was delivered from his brutal fury, and placed ſafe within the walls of Aſtorga, will, by the conqueſt of Leon, finiſh that horrid monſter's ſeverity.

D. Garcia. The ſucceſs will ſoon ſhew it: but I beg we may have ſome other converſation: may I be ſo free as to beg to know who you have written to ſince fate brought us here?

Elvira. From whence does your concern ariſe? Why do you aſk this queſtion?

D. Garcia. Only out of pure curioſity, madam.

Elvira. Curioſity is ſuppoſed to be the daughter of jealouſy.

D. Garcia. Not the leaſt of what you ſuppoſe. Your commands deter me from that vice.

Elvira. Without making further enquiry into the reaſon for your aſking, I have wrote two letters

to the countefs of Leon, and to the marquis Don Louis at Burgos two: does this fatisfy you?

D. Garcia. To no other perfon, madam?

Elvira. Really no. I am furprifed at this converfation.

D. Garcia. Pray recollect before you deny it. People often perjure themfelves by not confidering well.

Elvira. In this my mouth cannot be perjured.

D. Garcia. It is guilty of a very great falfhood, however.

Elvira. Prince!

D. Garcia. Madam!

Elvira. Heavens! what means this extravagance! tell me, have you loft your fenfes?

D. Garcia. Yes, indeed, I loft them, when I had the misfortune to fuck in the poifon of your love, and when I expected to meet with fincerity in thofe faithlefs charms that bewitched me.

Elvira. What treachery do you complain of?

D. Garcia. Ah! deceitful heart! how well fhe underftands the art of feigning! But every door is fhut againft her; no hole left to creep out at: here, look on this, and confefs your own writing. The ftyle of this part of a letter fhews plainly who you intended it for.

Elvira. And does this difturb you?

D. Garcia. Do not be afhamed of this writing.

Elvira. It is not ufual for innocence to blufh.

D. Garcia. Here indeed we fee it oppreffed, you will deny the letter, becaufe it wants a name.

Elvira. I do not deny it: it is my own hand writing—

D. Garcia. I am amazed you own with it; but I fuppofe you will fay it was wrote to fome indif-

ferent perſon, or that the kind expreſſions in it were intended for ſome relation, or female friend.

Elvira. No; I intended it for a lover, and a lover I eſteem.

D. Garcia. And may I, perfidious—

Elvira. Unworthy prince, ſtop the violence of your fury: though I do not need to obey any perſon here, and am only accountable to myſelf, yet I will clear myſelf of the offence you ſo baſely charge me with, to puniſh you. Do not doubt but you ſhall be undeceived. I want not a defence to ſhew my innocence; you ſhall judge in your own cauſe, and ſhall be obliged to pronounce your own ſentence.

D. Garcia. This myſtery I cannot underſtand.

Elvira. To your misfortune you ſhall ſoon underſtand it. Eliza, come here.

SCENE VI.

D. GARCIA, ELVIRA, ELIZA.

ELIZA.

MADAM.

Elvira to D. Garcia.] Take good notice whether I uſe any art to deceive you, whether by any movement of the body, or motion of the eye, I endeavour to ward off this ſudden ſtroke. [To Eliza.] Tell me immediately, where did you leave the letter I wrote juſt now?

Eliza. I confeſs I am to blame, madam; I am ignorant how it happened, I left it upon my table, and have juſt now been told, that Don Lopez, with his uſual freedom, came into my room, and obſerving every thing that was lying about, found

this letter. When he was opening it, Eleonor, endeavouring to catch it from him, before he could read it, it was torn in two pieces, one of which Don Lopez run off with, notwithstanding all her efforts to the contrary.

Elvira. Have you the other half?

Eliza. Yes, madam, here it is.

Elvira. Give it me, [to D. Garcia.] and we will see who is to blame; here, join this to that you have, and read it; I will hear you.

D. Garcia. To the prince Don Garcia. Hah!

Elvira. Read on; are you thunderstruck at the direction?

D. Garcia reads.] " If your rival, prince, a-" larms you, you should, however, fear yourself " more than him, and you may destroy, whenever " you please, the greatest obstacle your passion " meets with. I gratefully remember what Don " Garcia did in delivering me from our haughty " ravishers; his love, his devoirs are agreeable to " me, but he is despicable to me with his jealou-" sy. Purge, therefore, your flame from that foul " blemish; merit the regards that are bestowed " upon you; and when you are promised by peo-" ple to be made happy, do not absolutely refuse " to do so yourself." ELVIRA.

Elvira. Well, what think you of this?

D. Garcia. Ah! madam, I am quite distract-ed. Too great a punishment cannot be inflicted upon me.

Elvira. Enough; know that I desired the letter should be read to you now, for no other reason but to falsify your assertions, and that I might have an opportunity to unsay all that I find there in your favour. Farewel.

D. Garcia. Whither do you fly, madam?

Elvira. Where you, too jealous man, never ſhall come.

D. Garcia. Forgive, madam, a wretched lover, who has made himſelf hated by you, by a wondrous turn of fate, and who, if he had remained quiet and unconcerned, had deſerved to be more blamed. For, can a ſoul, which mixes not fear with its hope, be truly enamoured? And could you believe I had loved you, if I had been unalarmed at this letter? If I had not trembled at the thunderbolt which I fancied had deſtroyed all my happineſs? I leave it to your own judgment; ſay, would not ſuch an accident have thrown any other lover into my error? Alas! how could I withhold my aſſent to ſo clear a proof?

Elvira. Yes, you might have done it: my ſentiments ſo clearly explained to you, might have ſecured your doubts: you had not the leaſt to be afraid of, and if ſome others had had ſuch a pledge, they would never have paid the leaſt regard to what people ſaid.

D. Garcia. The leſs deſerving we are of an expected benefit, with more difficulty we depend upon it; a deſtiny too replete with glory ſeems ſlippery, and leaves to our ſuſpicions an eaſy declivity. As for me, who ſo little deſerve your goodneſs, I doubted of my happy fortune: I thought that being in a place of my juriſdiction, you forced yourſelf to be a little complaiſant; that diſguiſing to me your ſeverity——

Elvira. And was I capable of condeſcending to ſuch a mean ſhift! to make uſe of ſhameful fiction! to act upon motives of a ſhameful fear, to betray my ſentiments, and becauſe I was in your

power, to cover my hatred with a mask of favour! Could my heart be so little swayed by glory! can you think so, and dare to tell me it? Know that this heart cannot debase itself; that nothing under heaven can force it to do it: and if, by this odd mistake, you have seen marks of a goodness of which you are not worthy, know, that notwithstanding your power, I can shew the contempt I resolve to have for you, defy your fury, and convince you that I was not guilty of any baseness, nor ever will be so.

D. Garcia. Well, I am guilty, I do not deny it; but I beg pardon of your divine charms, I beg it for the sake of the most lively flame that ever two fair eyes kindled in a mortal's breast. But if your wrath cannot be appeased, if my crime is too great to be forgiven; if you do not look upon the love that caused it, nor the speedy repentance which my heart manifests to you; I must then, by putting a period to my days, free myself from these horrid pains. You must not imagine that I can live a minute under your displeasure; the cruel length of that minute already makes my heart sink under its cutting remorse; the terrible wounds of a thousand vultures are not to be compared to its mortal pangs. Tell me, madam, if I am to expect pardon, else this sword, by a favouroble stroke, shall, in your presence, pierce the heart of a wretched man; this treacherous heart, whose anxieties have offended your excessive goodness so much. I shall be too happy in death, if this last stroke cancels in your mind the image of my fault, and leaves no part of your hatred in the weak remembrance of my love: this is the only kindness my affection requires from you.

Elvira. Ah! too cruel prince.

D. Garcia. Say, madam, ſpeak.

Elvira. Should I ſtill be kind to you, and allow myſelf to be affronted ſo frequently?

D. Garcia. A mind that is in love can never give an affront, and that love excuſes its faults.

Elvira. Love cannot excuſe ſuch fury.

D. Garcia. All its ardour ariſes from its movements, and the ſtronger it is the more difficulty it finds—

Elvira. Speak to me no more of it; you deſerve my hatred.

D. Garcia. Do you hate me then?

Elvira. I will try to do it at leaſt; but I fear my endeavours will be to no purpoſe, and that all the diſpleaſure your behaviour has excited will not be ſufficient to make me carry my revenge far enough.

D. Garcia. Do not try the effects of ſo heavy a puniſhment, as I offer you my life for your revenge; pronounce my ſentence, and I will obey you immediately.

Elvira. A perſon who cannot hate, muſt be ill qualified to kill.

D. Garcia. Determine either to forgive or puniſh me; I cannot live except your goodneſs grant a pardon to my raſh miſtakes.

Elvira. Alas! my reſolutions are too plainly ſeen; I think it is forgiving a criminal, when one tells him they cannot hate him.

D. Garcia. Ah! it is too much. Allow me, adorable princeſs—

Elvira. Hold, I hate myſelf for my weakneſs.

D. Garcia alone.] At laſt I am—

SCENE VII.

D. GARCIA, D. LOPEZ.

D. LOPEZ.

I AM come to inform you of a ſecret, that may juſtly alarm your love.

D. Garcia. Do not, while I am in this charming tranſport, come to tell me of ſecrets or alarms; after what I have juſt heard and ſeen, I will encourage no ſuſpicions; the unequalled goodneſs of ſo dear an object ſhould ſhut my ears againſt all vain reports; ſo let me hear no more of them.

D. Lopez. My lord, your intereſt is all I conſider, ſo let it be juſt as you pleaſe: I thought what I had diſcovered ſhould be immediately communicated to you; but as you do not chuſe to hear it, I am ready to change the diſcourſe, and tell you, that every family in Leon has already thrown aſide the maſk, upon the report of the troops of Caſtile; and eſpecially the populace have ſhewn ſuch reſpect to their new king, that it, to all appearance, makes the tyrant tremble for fear.

D. Garcia. However, Caſtile ſhall not have the victory without our attempting to ſhare the honour of it; our troops may be able to imprint fear in the mind of Moorgat. But let me hear that ſecret you have to tell me.

D. Lopez. I have nothing to ſay, my lord.

D. Garcia. Come, come, I give you free liberty to ſpeak.

D. Lopez. I am too well informed by what you ſaid, my lord, for that, and as my intelligence may

give you uneaſineſs, I will be ſilent for the future.

D. Garcia. I am determined to know it, without any more to do.

D. Lopez. I muſt obey you, my lord; but it would be imprudent to explain it in this public place. Let us go from hence, and you ſhall know it, and judge of it.

ACT III. SCENE I.

ELVIRA, ELIZA.

ELVIRA.

WHAT do you think of this ſtrange weakneſs in the heart of a princeſs, Eliza? to lay aſide my reſentment ſo ſoon, and forgive ſo baſe an affront?

Eliza. I am not ſurprized, madam, at your anger being abated; notwithſtanding the provocation you had to be diſobliged. I know it is very difficult to put up with an affront from the man we love; but as there is nothing more provoking, ſo nothing we ſooner forgive. If a beloved offender throw himſelf at our feet, he ſoon gets the better of our anger, and the more eaſily, if the offence proceeds from ſincere love.

Elvira. But this is the laſt time I ſhall bluſh for my weakneſs, whatever power love may have over me: and if he ever give me reaſon again to be angry, he muſt not expect forgiveneſs; if my tenderneſs for him ſoftens my reſentment, I will guard myſelf againſt him by an oath: for really a mind

inſpired by pride, let it be ever ſo ſmall a ſhare, is aſhamed to break its word; and frequently at the expence of a painful ſtruggle makes a bold attempt upon its own wiſhes, ſtands upon its honour, and ſacrifices every thing to the noble pride of maintaining its word; therefore by my having now pardoned him, no judgment can be made of what yet may happen; and whatever fortune may ſeem to prepare, I do not think I can be the prince of Navarre's, till he has manifeſted an entire cure of thoſe melancholy fits by which he is diſturbed, and give me ſufficient reaſon to think that he will never relapſe into the like affront again.

Eliza. But pray, madam, what affront is the jealouſy of a lover to us?

Elvira. Nothing deſerves a greater reſentment, and ſince we undergo ſo much when we are forced to own we love, ſince the rigid honour of our ſex oppoſes a mighty obſtacle to ſuch acknowledgments, ought a lover, when he ſees us ſurmount that obſtacle in his favour; ought he, I ſay, with impunity to doubt that teſtimony? And is he not very much to blame to diſbelieve that which is never ſaid without the greateſt reluctance.

Eliza. For my part, I think that we ſhould not be offended when they are a little diffident upon ſuch occaſions; and that it is a dangerous thing, madam, for a lover to be abſolutely perſuaded that he is beloved.

Elvira. Let us argue no more about this; every one thinks for themſelves; and in ſhort, my ſoul is offended with this ſcruple, and notwithſtanding my wiſhes, I feel ſomething which forbodes an eclairciſement between the prince and me, which,

in ſpite of his great virtue—But who comes here? Heavens! it is Don Silvio of Caſtile!

SCENE II.

ELVIRA, D. ALPHONSO, thought to be D. Silvio, ELIZA.

BY what ſurprizing turn of fortune, my lord, have you come hither?

D. Alphonſo. My arrival, madam, muſt needs ſurprize you, and my entering this town without noiſe, whoſe acceſs is rendered difficult by order of a rival, to eſcape being ſeen by the ſoldiers, is an accident you did not expect to meet with; but if in this I have ſurmounted ſome obſtacles, the deſire of ſeeing you is able to affect much greater wonders. My heart has felt inexpreſſible torments in being abſent from you, and I was not able to deny myſelf any longer the ſight of your amiable perſon. I come, therefore, to tell you that I return thanks to heaven, that you are reſcued from the hands of an execrable tyrant; but in the midſt of this happineſs, it is the greateſt torture to me to ſee that my rigorous fate envied me the honour of this glorious deed, and too unjuſtly offered to my rival the agreeable dangers of that piece of ſervice. Yes, madam, my reſolutions to break your chains would undoubtedly have been equal to his, and I ſhould have gained this victory for you, if heaven had not deprived me of that honour.

Elvira. That you have an heart capable of overcoming the greateſt dangers, I very well know, my lord, and I make not the leaſt doubt but that generous zealwhich animates you to revenge my quar-

rel, would have been able to have done for me all that another hand has performed; but without this action which you was capable of I am sufficiently obliged to the house of Castile. Every one knows what the count your father has done for the late king. After having aided him to the last hour, he made his kingdom a safe asylum for my brother; full twenty years he concealed him from the cruel rage of his enemies, and now to restore to his forehead the splendor of a crown, you are marching in person against our usurpers. Are you not content? Do not these brave efforts sufficiently oblige me to you? Would you, my lord, obstinately expect to captivate my whole fate to you? And must I never receive so much as the shadow of one sole benefit, but what comes from you? Ah! suffer me in these misfortunes I am exposed to by my destiny, to owe something to the cares of another likewise, and do not complain that the glory has been acquired by another person where it was impossible for you to be.

D. Alphonso. Yes, madam, I ought not any longer to complain; you are pleased with too much reason to constrain me to it; and we unjustly complain of one misfortune, when a much greater afflicts us. This succour from a rival greatly mortifies me; but, alas! this is not the greatest of my miseries. The blow, the severe blow, which wounds me to the heart, is to see that rival preferred to me. Yes, I but too plainly see that his happy pretensions prevailed above mine; and that opportunity of serving you, that advantage which offered of signalizing his bravery, that glorious exploit in saving you was nothing but the pure effect of the good fortune of pleasing you; the secret power of a

wondrous ſtar which made the glory fall where your wiſhes were fixed. Thus all my endeavours will be nothing but air, I am leading an army againſt your cruel tyrants, but I march with trembling when I conſider that your wiſhes will not be for me, and that if they are obtained, fortune prepares the happineſs of more noble ſucceſſes for my rival. Ah! madam, muſt I ſee myſelf precipitated from the glorious expectations I flattered myſelf with? And may I not be informed what I have done that deſerves this terrible fall?

Elvira. Aſk me nothing before you conſider what you ought to aſk of my ſentiments: and as for this indifference of mine which ſeems to diſturb you, I leave it to you, my lord, to anſwer for me; for, in ſhort, you cannot be ignorant that I know ſome of the ſecrets of your ſoul, and I believe that ſoul to be too noble and generous to deſire me to do what is not juſt. Speak; I make you the judge whether it is equitable to ſuffer myſelf to be crowned by an act of infidelity, whether you can, without the utmoſt injuſtice, offer me an heart which another has already gained; whether you have reaſon to complain and blame my refuſal, which would prevent you from committing a crime. Yes, my lord, it is a crime, for the firſt flames have ſuch ſacred rights over a generous ſoul, that it ſhould rather chuſe to renounce grandeur, and even life itſelf, than incline to a ſecond love. I have that ardour for you, which eſteem may ſuggeſt for an exalted courage, for a magnanimous heart; require no more from me than what I owe you; but maintain the honour of your firſt choice. Notwithſtanding your new flames, conſider what tenderneſs the lovely Agneſa retains for you; who for

an ungrateful man, for such you are, my lord, has rejected the greatest offers. How generously she disdained the splendour of a diadem; remember what dangers she has defied for your sake, and render to her heart what you owe it.

D. Alphonso. Ah! madam, present not her merit to my view; it is but too conspicuous to the ungrateful man who forsakes her; and if my heart should tell you what it feels for her, I fear it would not seem innocent with regard to you. Yes, that heart dares deplore her, and does not, without difficulty, follow the imperious violence of the love that drags it. No expectation ever flattered my desires towards you, but at the same time it extorted sighs for her, and in the midst of it's pleasing thoughts employed on you, still my soul cast a melancholy look towards my first love, reproached itself with the effect of your heavenly charms, and mixed remorse with my best wishes. I have done more, since I must tell you all, I have endeavoured to free myself from your empire, to break your chains, and again subject my heart under the innocent yoke of it's first conqueror. But after all my endeavours, my constancy being overcome, is still forced to submit to the evil that kills me, and were I to be for ever wretched, I cannot renounce my desires, or bear the melancholy idea of seeing you possessed by another; and the Father of all, who discovers your charms to me, before he lends his light to that marriage, must lend it to me by death. I know I betray a charming princess, but after all, madam, is my heart guilty? Does the powerful ascendant of your beauty leave the mind any liberty? Alas! I am much more to be pitied than she; she, by losing me, loses only a faith-

leſs man; and ſuch a ſorrow is eaſy to be comforted; but I have that unparalleled misfortune to abandon an amiable perſon, and of enduring alſo all the torments of a rejected love.

Elvira. You have no torments but what you yourſelf run into, for our heart is always in our own power; it may indeed ſometimes ſhew a little weakneſs, but, in ſhort, of all our paſſions reaſon is the chief.

SCENE III.

D. GARCIA, ELVIRA, D. ALPHONSO.

D. GARCIA.

MY coming is not, madam, I obſerve, very ſeaſonable, as it diſturbs your converſation. I muſt needs ſay I did not expect to meet with ſuch good company here.

Elvira. This ſight indeed ſurprized me extremely, and I no more expected it than you did.

D. Garcia. Yes, madam, ſince you ſay ſo, I do not believe you were forewarned of this viſit; but you, Sir, ought at leaſt to have done us the honour to have adviſed us of this happineſs, that we might have been prepared without ſurprize, to have performed thoſe honours which are due to you.

D. Alphonſo. My lord, you are ſo taken up with heroic cares, that I had been much to blame to have interrupted you; the ſublime thoughts of victorious princes cannot eaſily ſtoop to compliments.

D. Garcia. But victorious princes, whoſe heroic cares are ſo commended, inſtead of loving ſecrecy, chooſe to have witneſſes of what they do; their ſouls bred up to glory from their in-

fancy, makes them, in their undertakings, go bare-faced, and being always supported by high sentiments, never descend to mean disguises. Do you not, therefore, injure your heroic virtues in passing so secretly through these places; are you not afraid of people's looking upon this action as below your character?

D. Alphonso. Whether any body will condemn my conduct in this secret visit, I know not, but I can faithfully say I never courted obscurity in such undertakings as required the light. And were I to undertake an enterprize upon you, you should have no reason to think I surprized you, for I would take care to tell you of it beforehand. In the mean time let us continue upon the ordinary terms, and postpone our debates to other affairs. Let us suppress the boiling of our too warm blood, and not forget before whom we are both speaking.

Elvira to D. Garcia.] My lord, you are in the wrong, and his visit is such, that you——

D. Garcia. Ah! madam, it is too much to espouse his quarrel, you ought to dissemble a little better, when you pretend that you were ignorant of his coming. Your warmth and quickness to defend it is but an ill proof of its having surprized you.

Elvira. So little am I concerned at your suspicions, that I will not so much as condescend to deny it.

D. Garcia. Go on with your heroic pride, and without hesitating, let your whole heart explain itself. Do not deny any thing, since you have confessed it; it is giving too much credit to dissimulation. Be brief, lay aside scruples; say that you are sensibly touched with his passion, that his presence has something in it so pleasing, that——

Elvira. And if I have a mind to love him, can you hinder me? can you pretend to any command over my heart? and am I to regulate my desires by your direction? know that too much pride has deceived you if you think you have the least power over me, and that my sentiments arise from too great a soul to submit to fiction: I will not tell you whether the count is beloved, but know that he is very much esteemed, that his high virtue deserves a princess' love better than you; that his ardour and assiduity make all the impression on me a soul is capable of, and that if the over ruling power of fate puts it out of my power to reward him with my person, it is at least in my power to promise him that I will never become the treasure of your flames. And without amusing you any longer with vain hopes, this is what I engage myself to, and I will keep my word. I have disclosed my thoughts to you, since you will have it so, and discovered to you my real sentiments. Are you satisfied? have I sufficiently explained myself? Consider whether there remains any thing else for me to do in order to clear up your suspicions. In the interim, Don Silvio, if you persist in your resolutions to please me, I freely tell you that I have occasion for your aid; and desire your utmost efforts to punish our tyrants. Value not the transports of a capricious man, be deaf to his fury, and consider who it is makes this request of you.

SCENE IV.

D. GARCIA, D. ALPHONSO.

D. GARCIA.

WITH you every thing flouriſhes, your ſoul proudly triumphs over my confuſion. It is a pleaſant thing to you to hear the noble confeſſion of that victory which you obtain over a rival, but it muſt be an inexpreſſible addition to your happineſs to have that rival a witneſs to it, and my ſtifled pretenſions are illuſtrious trophies in your triumphant eyes. Enjoy this delight, taſte it with deep draughts, but know that you have not yet gained your point: I have too much reaſon to be enraged, and numberleſs events may yet happen. Deſpair, when it breaks looſe, goes a great way, and in him that is abuſed nothing is unpardonable. If the ungrateful woman, in flattery to you, has juſt now engaged never to be mine, my indignation will furniſh me with means to prevent her ever being yours.

D. Alphonſo. This obſtruction does not in the leaſt diſturb me. We ſhall ſoon ſee who is like to be the happy man; each by his valour will be able to defend the glory of his flames, or revenge their misfortune. But as between rivals, the moſt ſedate ſoul is eaſily tranſported beyond the limits of reaſon, and as I am unwilling that ſuch a converſation ſhould exaſperate either of us, I deſire you would ſhew me how I may retreat out of this place.

D. Garcia. No, no; do not fear that you will be forced to violate the order that was juſt now

prescribed you. Whatever just fury oppresses me and flatters you, I know when it should break out; this place is open for you; go then and exult in the advantages you have obtained. But take this along with you, my head alone can put your conquest into your hands.

D. Alphonso. When things arrive at that pitch, our difference will presently be decided by fortune.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ELVIRA, D. ALVAREZ.

ELVIRA.

ALL you say is to no purpose, Don Alvarez, I will never forget this offence, therefore you may return; the wound is incurable, and all endeavours to heal it make it but fester the more. Does he think I will yield to some false respects? No, he has carried things too far, and his vain repentance, which brought you hither, sollicits a pardon it shall never obtain.

D. Alvarez. Madam, you would be very much affected were you to see how he is grieved; never was any offence expiated with deeper remorse. It is well known, the prince is of an age that forces him to follow the first movements of his soul, and in such boiling blood as his, passion leaves no room for reflection. D. Lopez, prejudiced by a false report, was the occasion of his master's error: there was a very confused rumour concerning the count's secret arrival, and that you connived at it. The

prince believed this report, and his love being seduced by this false alarm, has made this mighty noise. But being now recovered from his mistake, he is perfectly sensible of your innocence, and his turning away D. Lopez is a plain evidence of that quick sense he has of his offending you.

Elvira. Alas! he too easily believes me too innocent; he has not an entire assurance of it yet. Bid him weigh all things well, and not be too hasty, for fear of being deceived.

D. Alvarez. Madam, he knows too well——

Elvira. Good D. Alvarez, let us finish this discourse; I am weary of it; it revives in me an unseasonable gloominess, and disturbs other more important affairs. Yes, the surprize of a great misfortune oppresses me, and the report of Agnesa's death has so strong a right in my sorrow, as absolutely excludes all other concerns.

D. Alvarez. This may be false news, madam; but my return carries a dismal piece of news to the prince.

Elvira. The utmost torment he can suffer is short of what he deserves.

SCENE II.

ELVIRA, ELIZA.

ELIZA.

I WAITED his departure, madam, to tell you something that will revive you again, since you will this moment be perfectly informed where Agnesa is. For this purpose a certain person unknown, has sent one of his servants to desire audience of you.

Elvira. Desire him to come immediately, Eliza; it is proper I should see him.

Eliza. But he begs that nobody may see him but yourself.

Elvira. Well, we shall be alone. I will give orders about that, while you introduce him. How great is my desire to know what news he brings! Whether, O heavens! do you send me joy or grief?

SCENE III.

D. PEDRO, ELIZA.

ELIZA.

WHERE———

D. Pedro. Here am I, madam, if you mean me.

Eliza. Where was your master when———

D. Pedro. He is hard by; shall I tell him to come?

Eliza. Yes; tell him that he is impatiently expected, and shall not be seen by any body. [alone.] There is some mystery in these precautions that I cannot penetrate. But here he comes.

SCENE IV.

AGNESA in a man's habit, ELIZA.

ELIZA.

WE have prepared, my lord—But what do I see? Ah! madam, do I really behold—

Agnesa. Do not discover me, Eliza, but let my sad destiny take vent under the fiction of having been my own murderer. This feigned death is

what has delivered me from all my tyrants; for under that name I may comprehend my relations. I have thereby avoided the hateful match, which rather than have consented to, I would have suffered a real death. Under this disguise, and the report of my death, I shall keep my fate a secret, and secure myself from that unjust persecution which may follow me even to this place.

Eliza. My astonishment might have betrayed you in public; but go into the closet there, and dry up the tears of the princess. You will find her there alone: she has been very cautious in putting away all witnesses.

SCENE V.

D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

ELIZA.

IS not this Don Alvarez I behold?

D. Alvarez. The prince sends me to you, to beg that you would make use of your utmost endeavours to procure him a moment's conversation with Elvira. He cannot live unless you favour him—but here he comes.

SCENE VI.

D. GARCIA, D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

D. GARCIA.

ALAS! Eliza, pity my misfortunes, which weigh me down to the earth.

Eliza. I should regard your torments, my lord, with other eyes than the princess does; but hea-

ven has so ordained it, that every one's opinion of things is quite different. And since she blames you, and fancies your jealousy to be a deformed monster, I would be complaisant, and endeavour to conceal from her eyes what might be disagreeable to them. A lover undoubtedly follows an useful method when he endeavours to accommodate his humour to ours; an hundred devoirs do less good than this one thing, for nothing is so much esteemed by us as what resembles ourselves.

D. Garcia. I know it, but, alas! the inhuman destinies oppose themselves to such well advised designs, and notwithstanding all my endeavours, are continually laying snares for me, which I cannot avoid. Not but that the ungrateful woman did, in the presence of my rival, make a too fatal confession against my interest, and testified for him so much tenderness, that it was impossible for me ever to forget it; but in short, having too hastily believed that she had introduced him into the place, I should be very much dissatisfied to leave upon her mind any just cause of which she might complain against me. Yes, if I am abandoned, it shall be only owing to the infidelity of herself; for I resolved, by excusing myself, and begging her pardon, not to leave her ingratitude the least pretence.

Eliza. Give a little time to her resentment before you see her, my lord.

D. Gracia. Ah! if thou lovest me let me see her; it is a liberty that must be granted me: I cannot stir till her cruel disdain at least———

Eliza. Pray, my lord, defer it a little.

D. Garcia. Do not trifle with me any longer.

Eliza aside.] I find the princess herself must send

him away. [To Don Garcia.] Stay here, my lord, I will go and ſpeak to her.

D. Garcia. Tell her that I kept the perſon whoſe information was the occaſion of the offence no longer in my ſervice, but immediately turned him away, and that Don Lopez ſhall never—

SCENE VII.

D. GARCIA, D. ALVAREZ.

D. GARCIA looking in at the door which Eliza left open.

GOOD heaven! what is this I ſee? may I believe my own eyes? Alas! they are but too faithful witneſſes. Now my miſery is compleat. This fatal blow fully makes my deſtruction appear, and when I found myſelf diſturbed with ſuſpicions, it was heaven that with mute threats foretold this horrible diſgrace.

D. Alvarez. My lord, what have you ſeen that diſturbs you ſo much?

D. Garcia. I have ſeen what I can hardly believe; I would be leſs ſurprized at the overthrow of all nature than at this accident. It is done—Fate—I cannot ſpeak—

D. Alvarez. My lord, endeavour to compoſe yourſelf.

D. Garcia. I have ſeen—Vengeance, O heaven!

D. Alvarez. What ſudden alarm—

D. Garcia. It will kill me, D. Alvarez, the thing is certain.

D. Alvarez. But, my lord, what can—

D. Garcia. Alas! all is over, I am betrayed; I

am murdered: a man—can I ſpeak it without dying? a man in the arms of my treacherous Elvira.

D. Alvarez. The princeſs, my lord, is ſo virtuous that—

D. Gracia. Oppoſe me not, Don Alvarez, after what I have ſeen. It is too much to defend her after I have beheld ſo black an action.

D. Alvarez. Our paſſions, my lord, frequently make us miſtake a deceiving object for a true one, and ſo think that a virtuous ſoul can—

D. Garcia. Prithee leave me, Don Alvarez, a counſellor is offenſive upon this occaſion; nothing ſhall adviſe me but my paſſion.

D. Alvarez. There is no arguing with him in this condition. [Aſide.]

D. Garcia. O cruel wound! but I will ſee who it is, and puniſh with my hand—But ſee, ſhe is coming, cannot thou contain thyſelf, my rage?

SCENE VIII.

ELVIRA, D. GARCIA, D. ALVAREZ.

ELVIRA.

WELL, what would you have? and what hopes can your boldneſs flatter itſelf with after ſuch proceedings? Can you have the aſſurance to appear again before me? and what can you ſay that will become me to hear?

D. Garcia. I ſay, that all the wickedneſs of the damned is not ſo bad as your diſloyalty; that deſtiny, the devils, nor heaven in it's wrath never produced any thing ſo wicked as you are.

Elvira. What is the meaning of this? I expect-

ed an excuse for an affront, but I find I am deceived.

D. Garcia. Yes, you are deceived. You did not think that by the accident of the door being open I saw the traitor in your arms, and beheld your shame and my own ruin. Is it the happy lover returned? or some other rival whom I know nothing of? Strengthen me, O heaven, to bear the racking torture! Now blush, for you have reason; the mask of your treachery is now laid aside. This is what the disturbances of my soul so frequently intimated; it was not without any just reason that my flame was alarmed; my well-grounded suspicions were seeking what now my eyes have met with. But think not that I will bear this affront unrevenged. I know that we have no power over our desires, and that love will every where grow without dependance; that there is no forcibly entering into an heart, and that every soul is free to name it's conqueror; and therefore I should have no reason to complain of you, if you had honestly expressed yourself to me at first, and my heart would have laid all the blame upon fate alone; but to see my flame approved by a false and hypocritical confession, is such a piece of treachery, such a base action, that it can never be sufficiently punished. No, no, after such an insult, hope for nothing; I am not myself, I am all rage; being betrayed on every side, my love must revenge itself to the purpose; I must, I must sacrifice every thing to my rage, and put a period to my days and despair at once.

Elvira. Since I have been so patient to all you have said, I hope I may now take the liberty to speak.

D. Garcia. And pray by what florid diſcourſe, what artful ſpeech—

Elvira. If you have any thing farther to ſay to me, you may add it, I am ready to hear it; if not, I hope you will pay a little attention to me.

D. Garcia. Well, then, I attend: ye heavens, what patience is mine!

Elvira. I bridle my wrath, and will, without the leaſt anger, anſwer your mad diſcourſe.

D. Garcia. You will perhaps—

Elvira. I have liſtened to you as long as you pleaſed; pray do the ſame to me. I am aſtoniſhed at my deſtiny, and I believe there never was any thing upon earth ſo prodigious as it is; nothing more inconceivable for it's novelty, and nothing leſs ſupportable with reſpect to reaſon. I have a lover who makes it his whole ſtudy to perſecute me, who amidſt all the amorous expreſſions of his mouth, has no eſteem for me in his heart; nothing that can do juſtice to the blood I ſprung from, nothing that can defend the innocence of my actions againſt the leaſt ſhadow of a falſe appearance. Yes, I ſee—[Don Garcia ſeems deſirous of ſpeaking.] Do not interrupt me—I ſee, I ſay, my unhappineſs carried to that pitch, that one who ſays he loves me, and would make me believe that he would defend my reputation againſt the whole ſuſpecting univerſe, is he that is the greateſt enemy to it. He ſuſpects me on every occaſion; he not only does ſo, but, what wounds love, he makes a noiſe of it. Inſtead of acting like a lover, who had rather die than offend what he loves, who calmly bemoans himſelf, and ſeeks with reſpect to have his doubts ſatisfied; he proceeds to extremities, and is all rage, invectives, threats. But I will now

ſhut my eyes to every thing that may render him deſpicable to me, and by an act of mere goodneſs, will make this freſh affront an occaſion of his future quiet. Your great rage proceeds from what you ſaw by mere chance; I ſhould be in the wrong to contradict your ſight, and I own you might have ſome reaſon to be uneaſy at it.

D. Garcia. Is it not therefore——

Elvira. Stop a little, and you will know what I am reſolved to do. It is neceſſary that the fates of both of us ſhould be accompliſhed: you are now upon the brink of a mighty precipice, and you will either miſcarry or eſcape, according to the courſe you ſhall now take. If, prince, regardleſs of what you have ſeen, you act towards me as you ought, and require no other proof but me, to condemn the error of your uneaſineſs; if by a ready compliance of your ſentiments, you are willing to believe me innocent upon my word alone, and laying aſide all your ſuſpicions, blindly believe what I tell you; this ſubmiſſion, this mark of eſteem ſhall cancel, in my breaſt, all your paſt miſbehaviour; I inſtantly recede from that indignation which I have juſtly declared againſt you: and I can hereafter chuſe my own lot, without prejudicing what I owe to my birth; my honour, being content with this ready obedience, promiſes to your love both my heart and my hand; but remember what I am going to tell you; if this offer I now make you has ſo little prevalence with you, as not to obtain an entire ſacrifice of your jealous ſuſpicions; if what ſecurity my heart and birth can afford is not ſufficient; and if the powerful umbrages of your ſpirit force me to convince your ſenſes, and to produce an evident proof of my offended virtue, I am ready to

do it, and will satisfy you; but you must depart from me that moment, and never more have any pretentions to me; and I take the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth to witness, that, whatever we are destined to, I will sooner chuse to put a period to my days than to be yours. Make your choice of these two propósals; satisfy yourself, and I shall be satisfied.

D. Garcia. Good gods! was ever any thing invented with more artifice and disloyalty? Has all that the malice of hell ever studied any thing so horrid as this perfidy? Could a more cruel method be found out to perplex a lover? Ah! how well you know to employ my own weakness against me! and to manage for yourself the surprising strength of that fatal love which your traiterous eyes gave birth to! Because she is surprized, and cannot excuse herself, she cunningly offers me a pardon. Her dissembled gentleness forges an amusement to divert the effect of my wrath; and by means of the intricate knot of an election, would ward off the blow that threatens a villainous traitor. Yes, madam, your artifices would gladly deprive me of that insight which would condemn you; and your soul, pretending to be quite innocent, refuses to demonstrate itself fully, but upon such conditions, you think, as I will never accept; but you are deceived if you think to surprize me. Yes, yes, I am resolved to see what you have to defend yourself by; and what prodigy can justify what I have seen, and condemn my indignation.

Elvira. Remember that by this choice you cut off all pretensions to the heart of Donna Elvira.

D. Garcia. Be it so, I agree to it all: in the condition I am in I pretend to nothing farther.

Elvira. You will repent of the noiſe you have made.

D. Garcia. No, no, theſe are fooliſh ſtories, and I ought rather to tell you that ſome-body elſe may ſoon repent of it. The traitor, whoever he be, ſhall find it not eaſy to eſcape my rage with his life.

Elvira. This is too much, it cannot be born, my irritated heart can no longer preſerve it's fooliſh good nature. Let us leave the ungrateful villain to his caprice; and ſince he will periſh, let him. Eliza. [To Don Garcia.] You will force me to this diſcovery, but I will let you ſee the affront you put upon me.

SCENE IX.

ELVIRA, D. GARCIA, ELIZA.

TELL the lovely perſon to come forth—Go, you know my meaning, deſire it as from me.

D. Garcia. And can I——

Elvira. Patience, you ſhall be ſatisfied.

Eliza aſide going out.] Without doubt this is ſome new touch of jealouſy.

Elvira. Take care at leaſt that this noble indignation of yours perſeveres to the end; and above all, think well for the future at what price you would needs have your ſuſpicions cleared up.

SCENE X.

ELVIRA, D. GARCIA, AGNESA, ELIZA, D. ALVAREZ.

ELVIRA to D. Garcia, shewing him Agnesa.

THERE, thanks to heaven, is what occasioned your obliging suspicions: behold that face, and see if you do not observe the features of Donna Agnesa.

D. Garcia. O heavens!

Elvira. If the rage which disturbs your soul does at the same time hinder your sight; you have other eyes to consult which will leave you no room to doubt. Her death was a necessary piece of craftiness invented to avoid the authority of one who persecuted her, and under this disguise she concealed herself, the better to enjoy the fruit of her feigned death. [To Agnesa.] You will forgive me, madam, if I have been forced to betray your secrets, and act contrary to your expectation. His temerity is so very great that he deprives my actions of all manner of liberty, and my honour, urged by his suspicions, is constantly reduced to a necessity of defending itself. Our embracing each other, which this jealous man accidentally saw, has made him wreak his indignation on me. This was the reason of his rage and my disgrace. [To D. Garcia.] Now, like an absolute tyrant, enjoy the discovery you would needs make. But know that I will never blot from my memory the base insult you have been guilty of. And if ever I forget my oaths, may heaven pour it's severest chastisements upon my head; may a thunderbolt re-

duce me to aſhes when I reſolve to admit your love. Come, madam, let us depart, and avoid this furious monſter; let us fly from his infectious looks and the effects of his rage, and think of nothing elſe but how to free ourſelves from his hands.

Agneſa to D. Garcia.] Even virtue itſelf, my lord, has been wronged by the unjuſt violence of your ſuſpicions.

SCENE XI.

D. GARCIA, D. ALVAREZ.

D. GARCIA.

WHAT a cruel gleam of light diſſipates my miſtake, and at the ſame time involves my ſenſes in ſo profound an horror, that I can perceive nothing but the diſmal object of a remorſe that kills me! Ah! Don Alvarez, I ſee you were in the right; but hell has breathed it's curſed venom into my ſoul, and by a fatal ſtroke of extreme rigour, my greateſt enemy is within myſelf. To what end is it to love with the moſt ardent paſſion that ever a conſumed ſoul diſcovered, if by reaſon of it's tranſports, with which I am ſo much tormented, that love continually renders itſelf hateworthy? I muſt, I muſt revenge with my juſt death, the offence I have committed againſt her heavenly charms: what counſel can I follow! Alas! I have loſt the object for which alone life was deſirable; If I were able to renounce the hope of enjoying her, I can much more renounce life itſelf.

D. Alvarez. My lord———

D. Garcia. No, Don Alvarez, my death is neceſſary; no endeavours ſhall turn me from it;

but at the same time I must do some signal service to Elvira. For this end, I will seek some glorious means of ending my days, so that when I expire for her she may pity me, and say that my too great love was the occasion of my offending her. My hand must by a bold attempt give the death due to Moorgat, and boldly prevent the blow that Castile threatens him with: thus, in my death, I shall have the happiness of snatching so great a glory from my rival's hopes.

D. Alvarez. A piece of such valuable service, my lord, may well make your offence be forgot, but to hazard——

D. Garcia. Let me go then, that I may make my despair subservient to this glorious attempt, by the performance of a just duty.

ACT V. SCENE I.

D. ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

D. ALVAREZ.

MY master Don Garcia has formed a design, the like of which was never heard of; despair put him upon a new resolution, which was to go and sacrifice Moorgat, assuring himself success, and hoping in his death to find a pardon, and prevent the mortification of beholding his rival a sharer of that glory. As he was going out of these gates, unhappy tidings came to him, that that rival had already obtained the honour he was going to snatch from him, and had sacrificed the traitor. In reward for which service it is publicly said that Don Alphonso intends to give him his sister in marriage; which is

not incredible, since it was he that opened him a way to the throne.

Eliza. Yes, Elvira has heard this news, and has also had it confirmed by Don Louis, who writes her word, that Leon is now waiting for the happy return of her and Don Alphonso, and that she is there to receive a fortunate turn, an husband from the hands of her brother. It is plain enough from these words of his letter that Don Silvio is the husband she is to have.

D. Alvarez. This blow to the prince's heart—

Eliza. Will without doubt strike deep: I cannot help pitying his distress, and yet, if I have any judgment, he has still a very good interest in her he has injured. I cannot find, notwithstanding the success which is boasted of, that the princess shewed very great satisfaction at the news of her brother's coming, or with the letter; but—

SCENE II.

ELVIRA, AGNESA, ELIZA, D. ALVAREZ.

ELVIRA.

DON Alvarez, tell the prince to come hither. Allow me, madam, to speak to him in your presence concerning this accident which surprizes my soul; and do not accuse me of too hasty a change, if I lay aside my resentment against him. His unforeseen misfortune has extinguished it. He is miserable enough, without the addition of my hatred. Heaven, who thus rigorously treats him, has but too well executed the oaths I have made. I was obliged by the sentence of offended honour, never to be his; but since I see fate is too severe

to his love, the ill ſucceſs of what he does in my favour cancels the offence, and reſtores him my compaſſion. Yes, ſuch rough blows have ſeverely revenged me, diſarmed my indignation, and now, by a compaſſionate care, I am ſeeking to comfort the misfortunes of a wretched lover; and I believe his flame has well deſerved that compaſſion I would ſhew.

Agneſa. Madam, they would be in the wrong who ſhould blame the tender ſentiments you are inſpired with, what he has done for you—he comes, and how much he is aſtoniſhed with this amazing ſtroke plainly appears by the paleneſs of his face.

SCENE III.

D. GARCIA, ELVIRA, AGNESA, ELIZA.

D. GARCIA.

HOW muſt I appear before you, madam, whom I have—

Elvira. No more of that, Don Garcia; your deſtiny has made a change in my heart; and conſidering the diſmal condition its rigour has thrown you in, my wrath is appeaſed, and your peace is made. Yes, though you have deſerved what heaven has afflicted you with, though your jealous ſuſpicions have ſullied my fame with moſt incredible indignities, yet I cannot but own that I pity your misfortune to that degree as to be ſomewhat diſpleaſed with our ſucceſs. I deſpiſe the favours of that ſervice, when my heart muſt be ſacrificed to reward it, and I could wiſh it were in my power to redeem the moments when deſtiny made me curſe you ſo much. But in ſhort, you know that

it is the fate of such as we, to be ever chained down to the public interests, and that heaven has ordained that the brother, who is concerned in the disposal of my hand, is also my sovereign. Yield as I do, prince, to this violence, to which those of my birth are subject; and if the uneasinesses of your love be great, let it comfort itself with the share that I have therein, and not make use of the power which your valour gives you in this place against this surprizing stroke; it would undoubtedly be an act unworthy of you to struggle against fate; and when it is to no purpose to oppose one's self to its rage, a ready submission shews a greatness of soul. Therefore make no resistance, but set wide the gates of Astorga to my brother, who is coming; let me render him those rights which he has a pretence to from me, and which I am resolved not to fail in; and perhaps that fatal homage which, contrary to my inclination, I offer him, may not go so far as you think.

D. Garcia. You are too good, madam, in endeavouring to sweeten the bitter draught that is prepared for me; you may, without any such reluctance, suffer the cruel thunder of your whole duty to fall on me. I have nothing to say, in the condition I am in, to you. The most severe punishments which have been invented are not too severe for me; and I know that I should be in the wrong to murmur at any thing that may befal me. Alas! in what manner could I authorize the boldness of the least complaint against you? my love has numberless times been guilty of outrages, and rendered itself hateful to you, and when, by a just sacrifice, my arm was preparing to do some service to your family, my stars abandoned me, and made

me taſte the bitter grief of being prevented by my rival's arm. After this, madam, I can pretend to nothing, I deſerve the blow which I expect, and I ſee it coming, without daring to tempt the favourable aid of your heart againſt it. What remains for me in this my utmoſt infelicity, is to ſeek a remedy in myſelf; and by a death propitious to my wiſhes deliver my troubled heart from all its woes. Yes, Don Alphonſo will ſoon be in this place, and my rival already begins to appear. He ſeems to have flown hither from Leon, to receive the recompence of a ſacrificed tyrant. Fear not that any reſiſtance ſhall ſhew the power I have here; there is no human force which I would not defy for your ſafety, if you gave me your conſent to do it; but I dare not preſume to expect that glorious conſent, I who needs muſt appear ſo deſpicable to you, and I would not, by vain efforts, throw the leaſt obſtacle in the way of your juſt deſigns. No, madam, I do not in the leaſt conſtrain your ſentiments; I will leave you in full liberty, I will open the gates of Aſtorga to that victorious happy prince, and patiently undergo the laſt cruelty of my fate.

SCENE IV.

ELVIRA, AGNESA, ELIZA.

ELVIRA.

IMAGINE not, madam, that the deſpair which his deſtiny expoſes him to is the occaſion of my uneaſineſs. You will be juſt to me, if you believe that your intereſt has no ſmall ſhare in the

grief with which my heart is disturbed. I am no less sensible of friendship than of love, and if I complain of any dire disgrace, it is that the dreadful wrath of heaven has from me borrowed those shafts it lances against you, and has rendered my eyes guilty of a flame which gives unworthy treatment to the goodness of your heart.

Agnesa. This, madam, is an accident which your eyes ought not to be angry with heaven for. If my weak attractions have exposed me to the ill fortune of having to do with an inconstant, heaven could not better alleviate that misfortune, than by making use of you to deprive me of that heart; I ought not at all to be ashamed of an inconstancy which demonstrates the difference between your attractions and mine. If I sigh for this change, it is because I foresee it fatal to your wishes, and in this grief which my friendship excites in me, I blame my want of merit in your behalf, not being able to retain an heart, the image whereof so much disturbs your desires.

Elvira. Rather accuse yourself of that unjust silence, which has concealed the understanding there was between you two; this secret, had it been sooner known, might, perhaps, have spared both of us these uneasy troubles, and my just coldness toward him might, in their birth, have stifled the desires of a rover, and sent back—

Agnesa. Madam, he is coming.

Elvira. You may remain here, without looking at him. Do not go away, madam, but stay, and be a witness to what I shall say to him.

Agnesa. I consent, madam, yet I very well know, that were another in my place they would avoid such a conversation.

Elvira. You will not have the leaſt reaſon to be ſorry at it, madam, if the gods ſecond my wiſhes, I aſſure you.

SCENE V.

ALPHONSO, ELVIRA, AGNESA.

ELVIRA.

I Beg, my lord, that you would attend to what I am going to ſay, before you ſpeak. Fame has already brought to our ears the news of your victorious atchievements, and I admire, as all do, at the ſpeedy and happy turn which they have given to our deſtiny. I know very well that a ſervice of ſo much importance can never receive a reward adequate to its deſerts, and that every thing is due to you for the immortal exploits which replaces my brother on the throne of his anceſtors. But tho' he offers you the homages of his heart, make a generous uſe of your advantages; and ſuffer not, my lord, this glorious blow to bring me under an imperious yoke. Do not allow your love, which knows what intereſt I eſpouſe, obſtinately to triumph over a juſt refuſal. Do not permit my brother to begin his reign by an act of tyranny over his ſiſter: Leon has abundance of rewards, which may do more honour to your high valour; an heart forcibly given you, would be too mean a preſent for your virtues. Can a man ever be ſatisfied in himſelf when, by conſtraint, he obtains what he loves? It is a woful advantage, and a generous lover diſdains to be happy upon ſuch conditions. He will not owe any thing to that violence which the right of birth exerciſes over our hearts, and is al-

ways too zealous for the object he loves, ever to suffer it to be sacrificed to it as a victim. Not that this heart of mine intends to reserve that for another's merit, which it refuses to yours. No, my lord, I will promise you no person shall ever have power over me, a sacred retreat shall to every other pursuit—

D. Alphonso. Madam, I have been very attentive to all that you have said, and would, by two words, have prevented it all, if your false alarm had prevailed less over you. I know that a common report which is generally believed, ascribes to me the glory of having slain the tyrant, but in short, the people alone, as we are informed, being stirred up by Don Louis to do their duty, bore away the honour of that heroic act, which I was reported to be the author of. The cause of which was this: Don Louis, the better to carry on his noble designs, had caused it to be reported, that I and my men had seized the city, and by this news he pushed on the people to cut off the usurper as soon as possible. He knew how to conduct the whole by his prudence and zeal, and has just now sent one of his servants to inform me of the whole affair. But at the same time reveals me a secret, at which I dare say you will be as much surprized as I was. You expect a brother, and Leon its true master, and now heaven presents him to your eyes. Yes, I am Don Alphonso, and being preserved and bred up under the name of the Prince of Castile, a man illustrious effect of that sincere friendship, which was between Don Louis and the king my father. Don Louis has all the proofs of this secret, and will display the truth of it to every body; and now my thoughts are taken up with other cares; not that

they are croſſed with reſpect to your love, that my paſſion quarrels with ſuch a diſcovery, and that the brother, in my heart, is troubleſome to the lover. My flame has received, without the leaſt murmur, from this ſecret, the change which nature preſcribes to it, and the blood which conjoins us has ſo entirely detached me from the affection for you with which my heart was touched, that it now longs for nothing ſo much as the pleaſing tranſports of its firſt chain, and the means of rendering to the amiable Agneſa that which her exceſſive goodneſs has deſerved. But her uncertain deſtiny renders mine miſerable, and if all be true that is ſaid, in vain does Leon invite me, in vain does a throne wait for me; it is not in the power of a throne to make me happy; it has no other charms to me, than as it would let me taſte the joy of placing it on that object that heaven has recalled me to, and by that means to repair, as much as poſſible, the injury I have done her noble virtues. It is from you, madam, I have reaſon to expect to be informed what has become of her. Pray inſtruct me in it, and by your diſcourſe either render me for ever happy, or miſerable.

Elvira. Be not ſurprized if I delay anſwering you; for this news, my lord, confounds me. I will not take upon me to ſay whether Agneſa be dead or alive, but this gentleman here, than whom ſhe cannot have a more faithful friend, will give you ſuch information as you may depend upon.

D. Alphonſo knowing Agneſa.] Ah! madam, how happy am I in theſe perplexities to ſee the gleaming of your heavenly charms! But with what eye can you behold an inconſtant, whoſe crime——

Agnesa. Ah! say not that a heart which I esteem could be inconstant. I cannot bear the thought, and the excuse troubles me. Nothing could offend me, since you loved this princess, because her high merit is a sufficient excuse for any ardour she might cause. The love you bore her does not make you in any wise guilty with respect to me; but had it been otherwise, know that you would in vain endeavour to make me forget such an affront, and that no force, no repentance should be able to cancel it in my heart.

Elvira. Ah! dear brother, the joy you give me is infinite, I love your choice, and bless the accident which causes you to crown so pure a friendship, and of two noble hearts that I dearly love—

SCENE THE LAST.

D. GARCIA, ELVIRA, AGNESA, D. ALPHONSO, ELIZA.

D. GARCIA.

LET me not behold, madam, your great contentment, but suffer me to die in full persuasion that your duty is what commits some violence upon you. I know you have it in your power to dispose of yourself, and I do not desire to oppose your inclinations; I am all obedience. But I must own your gaiety amazes me, and shakes my resolution. It transports me so much, that I am afraid I shall not be able to command. I would punish myself if it would deprive me of that submissive respect, which is owing to you. Yes, your commands have made me bear patiently the misery of my love; they are so powerful, that I would

rather die than disobey them. Still I am shocked at your present joy, and cannot see it without concern; the most prudent people cannot answer for their conduct on such occasions. I beg you may for a moment suppress your joy, and shew some compassion for my misfortune. I cannot bear to see the happiness of a rival. I think this the smallest favour I can ask, as my disgrace gives place to another lover. I do not desire it, madam, for a long time. My absence will satisfy your wishes. I shall go where I shall only hear the account of your marriage by report, which will induce me to hasten the end of an unhappy life.

Agnesa. Suffer me, my lord, to blame your complaining, as the princess has compassion for your misfortunes. The joy at which you are displeased arises intirely from the good which is prepared for you. Your prosperity gives her pleasure, and she has found in your rival a brother. The secret is just now discovered; this is Don Alphonso, who has been so much talked of.

D. Alphonso. Thank heaven, my heart has all that it desires, after a long suffering, without abridging your happiness, and has the greater pleasure from being able to assist your love.

D. Garcia. Your excessive goodness, my lord, in offering to bear a part in my wishes, confounds me: heaven has diverted the stroke I dreaded, and any other person would imagine himself happy. But the lucky discovery of this pleasing secret makes me blameable towards the adorable object of my love; having fallen again into these treacherous suspicions, which I have been so often warned of to no purpose, I should despair of ever being happy. I deserve her hatred, and do not

deserve a pardon; whatever success fortune may give me, I deserve death, and expect it alone.

Elvira. No, no, prince, my pity is moved by your sorrow and submission. I can perceive your sincere love shine through all your actions; I see the weakness of my oaths; since the influence of the heavens is the cause of your defects, we should indulge them a little, and whether jealous or not, my king may give me to you without force.

D. Garcia. Good heavens, enable me to bear the joy this confession gives me.

D. Alphonso. I beg, my lord, that this marriage may for ever join our hearts and kingdoms, after all our vain debates; but time presses, and Leon expects us, therefore let us go and chearfully satisfy its zeal, and give the last stroke to the tyrant's party by our presence.

THE END.

THE

SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS.

A

COMEDY.

C O N T E N T S

The SCHOOL *for* HUSBANDS, *a Comedy of Three Acts, acted at Paris, at the Theatre of the Palace-Royal, June 24th, 1661.*

THE Comedy of the SCHOOL for HUSBANDS is so copious, so polished, and so simple, that few pieces, especially of three acts, can be put in competition with it; a fresh incident appears in every scene, which are artfully unfolded, and insensibly lead to one of the most excellent catastrophe's that ever appeared upon the French stage. The hint of this comedy is taken from the Adelphi of Terence; in which two old men, of opposite humours, one an uncle, and the other a father, gave a very different education, the one to his nephew, and the other to his son. In the SCHOOL for HUSBANDS are two guardians, one of an indulgent temper, the other of a rigid one, each of whom are intrusted with the education of a young girl. Moliere has improved upon Terence, in giving to his two characters not only the concern of fathers, but of lovers also, an interest so rare and lively, that it forms an entire new piece upon the ancient poet's simple plan.

ACTORS.

SGANAREL, } Brothers.
ARISTO, }
ISABELLA, } Sisters.
LEONORA, }
VALERE, Lover to Isabella.
LISETTA, Leonora's Waiting Woman.
ERGASTE, Valere's Footman.
A COMMISSARY.
A NOTARY.
TWO VALETS.

SCENE, a public place in Paris.

THE

SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SGANAREL, ARISTO.

SGANAREL.

I BEG we may not talk so much, brother, but let each of us live according to his own manner of thinking; notwithstanding you are older, and may be wiser, I will not be reproved by you, my fancy alone shall direct me.

Aristo. But your manner of living is condemned by every body.

Sganarel. Yes, brother, by fools like yourself.

Aristo. I am obliged to you for this kind compliment.

Sganarel. Since all must be discovered, I would gladly know what there is in me for these fine cavillers to find fault with.

Aristo. That morose temper, which avoids all pleasures of society, gives a whimsical air to all

your actions, and makes yourself and every thing about you appear barbarous.

Sganarel. Do you think I would make myself a slave to fashion? Certainly I should dress myself for my own pleasure; you would by your trifling stories, Mr. Elder Brother, (for, to be plain, so you are by twenty years) persuade me into the fashions of young fops; insist upon my wearing those small hats, which allow their weak brains to evaporate, and the large powdered bushy wigs, which darken the figure of a human countenance; those jerkins but just below the arms, and large bands hanging down, very long sleeves to dip in the sauce at table, and petticoats in imitation of breeches; those handsome shoes dressed out with ribbons, which appear like rough-footed pigeons, and those large rollers, where the captive legs are confined every morning, as if they were in the stocks, and which make those fine gentlemen walk with a straddle, as if they were flying?— It would undoubtedly give you great pleasure to see me dressed out in the manner as I observe you always do.

Aristo. One should not make themselves particular, but comply with the majority. An extreme on either side is offensive; no wise man should have any thing affected either in his words or cloaths, but follow what is introduced by custom. One should not imitate people who are so fond of being in extremes, that they would be uneasy if another person were a step beyond them. But I think it wrong upon one's single opinion obstinately to avoid what every other person does; it is certainly better to be among the number of fools, than to be the only one the reverse of every other person.

Sganarel. This is the opinion of an old fellow, who conceals grey hairs under a black periwig, to impose himself upon the world for younger than he really is.

Aristo. It is very odd that you must always upbraid me with my age, and rail against decency as well as chearfulness, as if old people were to think of the grave only, and not enjoy the pleasures of this world at all: old age is attended with disagreeable circumstances enough, without being slovenly and ill-tempered.

Sganarel. I am resolved to make no alteration in my dress, be it as it will. I will have a hat with a brim for to shelter my head, a long doublet, buttoned close as it should be, to keep the stomach warm for digestion; a pair of breeches made to fit my thighs, and shoes that will not pinch my toes, such as wise people wore formerly, in spite of the fashion; and whoever does not like my dress may close his eyes.

SCENE II.

Leonora, Isabella, Lisetta, Aristo and Sganarel whispering together at the further part of the stage, without being seen.

Leonora to Isabella.

I WILL take it all upon me to prevent your being found fault with.

Lisetta to Isabella.] What, always in a room without being seen by any body?

Isabella. Such is his temper.

Leonora. I pity you for it, sister.

Lisetta to Leonora.] It is lucky for you, ma-

dam, that his brother is quite of a different temper; and fate was very kind to you in throwing you into the hands of a reasonable man.

Isabella. It is a miracle, that he has not locked me up, or taken me with him to-day.

Lisetta. Faith I would send him to the devil with his ruff, and——

Sganarel being run against by Lisetta.] By your favour, whither are you going?

Leonora. We do not know yet; I was advising my sister to walk out and enjoy the benefit of this fine weather. But—

Sganarel, to Leonora.] For your part, you may go where you will; [pointing to Lisetta.] you have nothing to do but ramble, both of you together; [to Isabella.] but as for you, madam, if you please, I desire you may not go.

Aristo. Ah! brother, let us give them leave to go and entertain themselves.

Sganarel. I am your servant, brother.

Aristo. Young people would—

Sganarel. Young people are foolish, and old ones too sometimes.

Aristo. Do you think there is any harm in her going with Leonora.

Sganarel. No, but I would rather have her stay with me.

Aristo. But—

Sganarel. But her actions shall be under my direction: in short, I know it is my interest to take care of them.

Aristo. Am I less concerned in those of her sister?

Sganarel. Alas! every one judges and acts as he chuses. They have no relations, and our friend,

their father, in his last moments, committed the care of them to us, desiring us to marry them ourselves, or if that was not agreeable, to dispose of them to others at a proper age; by this contract he chose to give us over them from their childhood the authority of father and husband. You took the care of bringing up one, and I the other: you manage your charge as you think proper, pray let me do the same.

Aristo. I think—

Sganarel. I think, and will speak it freely, that I talk right upon this subject. You suffer yours to flaunt about taudry and fine:—I am satisfied. Let her jaunt about, love idleness, allow coxcombs to pay compliments to her;— with all my heart:— but I am determined mine shall live as I please, and not have her own will; she shall be dressed in a decent stuff gown, wear black on holidays, go little abroad, but prudently apply herself to housewifery; at her spare hours mend my linen, or for her entertainment knit stockings; she shall not hear the flattery of fops, nor go abroad without somebody to take care of her: in short, the flesh is weak, I know what is said concerning these matters, and will not wear horns if I can avoid it; and as it is her fate to marry me, I will be as sure of her person as my own.

Isabella. You have no reason, I believe—

Sganarel. Be silent; I will let you know whether you are to go abroad without me.

Leonora. What then, Sir,—

Sganarel. Lord, madam, no words; I do not talk to you, for you are too wise.

Leonora. Are you angry to see Isabella with us?

Sganarel. Why really yes, you spoil her for me. Your visits here displease me, and you will oblige me if you will make no more of them.

Leonora. Must I also tell you my real sentiments? I do not know how she puts up with this; but I know what effect suspicion would have on me; and though both one woman's daughters, we can hardly be sisters, if your usual behaviour induces her to love you.

Lisetta. So many cautions are shameful: are we in Turkey, to be locked up? It is said women are kept like slaves there, and that those people are accursed of heaven on that account. Our honour is very weak indeed, if it is necessary to watch it continually: do you think you can prevent our intentions by these precautions? No, no, the utmost craftiness is to no purpose when we take any thing into our head; upon my word, the best way is to confide in us. Confinement puts our inventions on the stretch, and he that takes it in hand brings himself into great danger, for our honour is always for guarding itself. When we are so carefully watched, we have the greater desire to do imprudent things; and were I restrained by a husband, I would be vastly inclined to realize his suspicions.

Sganarel to Aristo.] This is your manner of education, good Mr. Teacher; and you can bear it without being concerned.

Aristo. One should only laugh at what she says, brother; yet there is reason in it. Her sex loves liberty, and will not be kept from it by severity; bolts and grates, and distrustful cares will not make virtuous wives or girls; it is not authority, but honour, that will keep them to their duty. A

woman, who is prudent by force only, is a ſtrange thing indeed. It is to no purpoſe to attempt to govern their actions; in my opinion the heart muſt be gained; and with all poſſible care, I ſhould not think my honour very ſafe in the hands of a perſon, who wants only an opportunity of tranſgreſſing amongſt the aſſaults of temptation.

Sganarel. It is all nonſenſe.

Ariſto. Well, be it ſo; but it is my opinion, that young people ſhould always be inſtructed with good humour; their failings ſhould be reproved with meekneſs, and the name of virtue not made terrible to them. By theſe maxims I have guided my cares for Leonora; I have always complied with her youthful deſires, and have not looked upon ſmall liberties as criminal; and it gives me pleaſure that I have no reaſon to repent of my indulgence. I have introduced her into genteel company, allowed her to attend balls, plays, and all diverſions, which I think neceſſary to form the minds of young people; in my opinion, the world is a ſchool, which teaches the ways of life better than can be taught by books. She takes pleaſure in ſpending money upon faſhionable cloaths and linen; what would you have me do? Theſe pleaſures ſhould be granted to young women, when one can afford it; and I am willing to gratify her wiſhes. She is obliged to marry me by her father's deſire, but I never will be a tyrant to her. I am ſenſible that there is no equality in our ages, therefore I give her her own choice; and if a great deal of tenderneſs, polite reſpect, and a thouſand pounds a-year, can in her opinion make up for the difference in age, ſhe may have me for a huſband; if not, let her pleaſe herſelf; if ſhe can

be happier with another perſon, I ſhall agree to it: it will give me more pleaſure to ſee her happy with another, than to be poſſeſſed of her againſt her inclination.

Sganarel. He is all ſweetneſs.

Ariſto. Indeed it is my temper, and I am thankful for it; I will never follow thoſe rigid rules which induce children to wiſh their parents dead.

Sganarel. But liberties of youth are not eaſily laid aſide, and you will not be of the ſame way of thinking when her manner of living is changed.

Ariſto. And why muſt it be changed?

Sganarel. Why?

Ariſto. Yes, why ſhould it?

Sganarel. I cannot tell.

Ariſto. Is there any thing in it to hurt a perſon's honour?

Sganarel. And if you marry her, will ſhe pretend to the ſame liberties which ſhe took while ſhe was unmarried?

Ariſto. Why ſhould ſhe not?

Sganarel. Will you be ſo complaiſant as to allow her ribbons and patches?

Ariſto. Undoubtedly.

Sganarel. Allow her to attend all balls and aſſemblies like a mad creature?

Ariſto. Certainly.

Sganarel. And ſhall the beaux come to your houſe?

Ariſto. And what then?

Sganarel. To make merry, and give entertainments?

Ariſto. I conſent to it.

Sganarel. And ſhall your wife hear their fine ſpeeches?

Ariſto. Ay.

Sganarel. And you will behold theſe coxcombs viſits in ſuch a manner, as may ſhew you do not in the leaſt regard them?

Ariſto. Certainly.

Sganarel. Go, you are an old fool.—[to Iſabella.] Get you in, that you may not hear this infamous conduct.

SCENE III.

ARISTO, SGANAREL, LEONORA, LISETTA.

ARISTO.

I WILL commit myſelf to the fidelity of my wife, and intend always to live as I have done.

Sganarel. How greatly will I be rejoiced when he is made a cuckold!

Ariſto. I cannot tell to what fortune I am born; but I know, that for your part, if you fail to be one, the fault muſt not be laid on you, for you have uſed every precaution to avoid it.

Sganarel. Laugh on, giggler; O what a pleaſure it muſt give one to ſee a buffoon of almoſt ſixty.

Leonora. I engage to preſerve him from the fate you talk of, if I marry him; he may aſſure himſelf of it: but know that my heart would be anſwerable for nothing, was I to be your wife.

Liſetta. There is a conſcience due to thoſe who confide in us; but it is delightful, really, to cheat ſuch people as you.

Sganarel. Be gone with your fooliſh ill-bred tongue.

Ariſto. You bring this ridicule upon yourſelf, brother. Farewell, alter your temper, and be forewarned, that locking up a wife is the worſt ſtep you can take.—Your ſervant.

Sganarel. I am not your's.

SCENE IV.

SGANAREL alone.

O HOW excellently they are all ſuited one to another! what a hopeful family; a fooliſh old dotard, who acts the fop in a crazy worn-out carcaſe, a girl that is miſtreſs, the arranteſt coquet that can be, and impertinent ſervants!———No, not even wiſdom herſelf could bring it about, ſhe would be deſtitute of all ſenſe and reaſon to endeavour the regulation of ſuch a family——Iſabella may loſe thoſe principles of honour ſhe has imbibed with me amongſt ſuch acquaintance; and, in order to prevent this misfortune, I intend ſhortly to ſend her back again to my cabbages and my turkies.

SCENE V.

VALERE, SGANAREL, ERGASTE.

VALERE at the further part of the ſtage.

THERE is the Argus that I deteſt, Ergaſte; the rigid guardian of her I love.

Sganarel thinking himſelf alone.] Is not the corruption of manners now-a-days very aſtoniſhing?

Valere. I will speak to him, if I can, and endeavour to get acquainted with him.

Sganarel. Instead of seeing that severity prevail, of which in former times virtue so properly consisted, the young people hereabouts, debauched, without restraint, do not take——

Valere. He does not perceive that we are bowing to him.

Ergaste. His blind eye is on this side, perhaps; let us get to the right side of him.

Sganarel. I must leave this place.—A city life can only produce in me the——

Valere approaching him.] I must endeavour to gain admittance to his house.

Sganarel hearing a noise.] How! I thought I heard a voice—in the country, heaven be praised, I am not plagued with these fashionable fooleries.

Ergaste to Valere.] Go up to him.

Sganarel still hearing a noise.] What would he be at? my ears tingle.—There, all the amusements of our young women are—[Seeing Valere bow.] Is that to me?

Ergaste. Go nearer.

Sganarel not minding Valere.] Here no coxcomb comes.— [Valere bows again.] What the deuce!—[Turns and sees Ergaste bow on the other side.] Again?—What mean these bows?

Valere. Accosting you in this manner, Sir, interrupts you, perhaps?

Sganarel. May be so.

Valere. But why so? I was so much delighted with the honour of your acquaintance, that I desired vastly to pay my respects to you.

Sganarel. Be it so.

Valere. To wait on you, and assure you, without any dissimulation that I am wholly at your service.

Sganarel. I believe so.

Valere. I am so fortunate as to be one of your neighbours, for which I am thankful to my happy destiny.

Sganarel. That is well done.

Valere. Have you heard the news, Sir, which is current at court, and thought to be true?

Sganarel. What does it concern me?

Valere. True; however, a man, sometimes, may be curious after novelties. Will you go, Sir, and see the grand preparations for the birth of our Dauphin?

Sganarel. If I think fit.

Valere. Paris, we own, affords us numberless amusements which are no where else. The country is a solitude in comparison. How do you pass away the time?

Sganarel. About my business.

Valere. The mind should have some relaxation; it flags by too earnest an attention to serious things. In what manner do you pass the evening before bed-time?

Sganarel. As I chuse.

Valere. Certainly; nothing could be said better; it is a reasonable answer, and good sense appears in never doing any thing but what one chuses. If I thought you was not too much taken up, I should come sometimes to your house, after supper, to pass away the time.

Sganarel. Your servant.

SCENE VI.

VALERE, ERGASTE.

VALERE.

WELL, what do you think of this whimsical fool?

Ergaſte. He has a ſurly way of anſwering, and receives people very ſavagely.

Valere. Ah! how vexed I am!

Ergaſte. At what?

Valere. At what?—It provokes me to ſee her I love in the power of a barbarian, a watchful dragon, whoſe ſeverity will not allow her the leaſt liberty.

Ergaſte. That makes for you, and on the effect of it your paſſion muſt build its ſureſt hopes. Know, for your encouragement, that a woman that is watched is half won, and the peeviſhneſs of fathers and huſbands always forwards the buſineſs of lovers. I intrigue very little, it is my leaſt accompliſhment, and I have not the leaſt pretenſions to galantry: but I have aſſiſted twenty of your ſportſmen, who often ſaid, they were beſt pleaſed to meet with thoſe churliſh huſbands, who never come home without grumbling, thoſe ſullen fellows, who without thought or reaſon condemn the conduct of their wives in every thing, and haughtily aſſuming upon the name of huſband, fall out with them for nothing in the company of their admirers.—One knows, ſay they, to make the beſt of theſe advantages; and the lady's indignation at ſuch kind of uſage, the ſoft complaining, the obliging condolence of the lover upon the occaſion, afford an op-

portunity to push things far enough. In short the surliness of Isabella's guardian is a circumstance sufficiently favourable for you.

Valere. I could never find the least opportunity of conversing with her these four months that I have been in love with her.

Ergaste. Love quickens people's wits; though it has little effect on yours: if I had been—

Valere. Why, what could you have done? when she is never to be seen without that brute, and there are neither maids nor footmen in the house whom I might influence to assist my passion by the flattering temptation of a reward.

Ergaste. Does she not know yet that you are in love with her?

Valere. That is a matter which my heart is not yet informed of; where-ever that churl has carried the fair one, she has seen me continually after her like a shadow, and my looks have always endeavoured to declare to her the violence of my passion. My eyes have spoke loudly to her; but who can tell me whether they could make their language be understood?

Ergaste. That language, it is true, may sometimes prove unintelligible, if it has neither writing nor speech for its interpreter.

Valere. What shall I do to get out of this extream uneasiness, and learn if the fair one knows I love her?—Let me know by some means.

Ergaste. That is what must be contrived. Let us go into your house a little, that we may consider of it better.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ISABELLA, SGANAREL.

SGANAREL.

YOU need go no farther, I know the house and person by the marks alone that you give me.

Isabella aside] Be favourable to me now, ye gods! and let the artful contrivance of an innocent passion succeed.

Sganarel. His name is Valere, I think you say people tell you?

Isabella. Yes, they told me so.

Sganarel. Go, be easy: get you in, and leave me to do it. I will go talk immediately to this young rake.

Isabella going.] The project I am now about is a very bold one for a young girl; but every considerate person will readily forgive me, when they know how severely I am treated.

SCENE II.

SGANAREL alone, knocking at the door, thinking it is Valere's.

LET us lose no time: this is the place.—Who is there?—Well, I am thinking.— Soho, I say, soho, somebody. I am not surprized, after this discovery, that he came thither just now in so

complaiſant a manner; but I will be expeditious, and his fooliſh hope—

SCENE III.

VALERE, SGANAREL, ERGASTE.

SGANAREL to Ergaſte, who comes out haſtily.

DEUCE take the lubberly aſs, who plants himſelf like a poſt directly before me, in order to throw me down.

Valere. Sir, I am ſorry for that——

Sganarel. Ah! it is you I look for.

Valere. Me, Sir?

Sganarel. Yes you; is not your name Valere?

Valere. Yes.

Sganarel. I come to ſpeak with you, if you pleaſe.

Valere. I ſhall do all in my power to ſerve you.

Sganarel. I am obliged to you, but I myſelf intend to do a good turn for you; and that is what brings me to your houſe.

Valere. To my houſe, Sir?

Sganarel. To your houſe; need you be ſo aſtoniſhed at that?

Valere. I have great reaſon to be ſo, and the honour you do me is——

Sganarel. Pray talk no more of honour.

Valere. Will not you walk in?

Sganarel. There is no occaſion for it.

Valere. Sir, pray go you firſt.

Sganarel. No; I will not go a ſtep farther.

Valere. I cannot hear you whilſt you remain here.

Sganarel. I will not ſtir.

Valere. Well, I muſt ſubmit:———Since the gentleman is reſolved upon it, bring a chair hither, quickly.

Sganarel. I will talk ſtanding.

Valere. Can I ſuffer you in this manner!

Sganarel. Oh! it is a terrible force upon you!

Valere. Such rudeneſs would be too inexcuſable.

Sganarel. Nothing can be ſo rude as not to pay attention to people that would ſpeak to us.

Valere. I obey you then.

Sganarel. You cannot do better. [They uſe abundance of compliments about putting on their hats.] So much ceremony is needleſs.——Will you hear me?

Valere. Undoubtedly, and with a great deal of pleaſure.

Sganarel. Anſwer me then;—Do you know that I am the guardian of a handſome young woman, called Iſabella, who lodges in this neighbourhood?

Valere. Yes.

Sganarel. If you know it, I need not inform you—but do you know likewiſe, that being ſenſible of her charms, I am concerned for her in another manner than as a guardian, and that ſhe is deſtined to the honour of my bed?

Valere. No.

Sganarel. Then I inform you of that; and, that it is very fit you ſhould not diſturb her with your paſſion.

Valere. Who, I, Sir?

Sganarel. Ay, you:—you need not diſſemble.

Valere. Who told you that I had a paſſion for her?

Sganarel. People that one may believe.

Valere. But who, pray?

Sganarel. She herſelf.

Valere. She!

Sganarel. Ay, ſhe: Is that ſaying enough?—— Like an honeſt girl, that has loved me from her infancy, ſhe told me all, juſt now; and more than that, charged me to let you know, that ſince ſhe has been followed every where by you, her heart, which your purſuit exceedingly offends, has underſtood but too well the language of your eyes; that ſhe very well knows your ſecret wiſhes; and that it is giving yourſelf a needleſs trouble to endeavour at explaining a paſſion farther, which is contrary to that affection ſhe reſerves for me.

Valere. Is it ſhe, do you ſay, that from herſelf made you——

Sganarel. Ay,—come to give you this frank and faithful account; and that having obſerved the violent love which diſturbs your mind, ſhe would have made known her intentions to you, if, under ſuch emotion of ſoul, ſhe could have found any body to ſend this meſſage by; but that, at laſt, the vexation of being under a ſtrict confinement, brought her to make uſe of me, to apprize you, as I have told you, that her affection muſt be granted to nobody but me; that you have ogled her long enough, and that, if you have ever ſo little underſtanding, you will take ſome other meaſures.—— Adieu, till I ſee you again—this is what I had to tell you.

Valere low.] What think you of this adventure, Ergaſte?

Sganarel low aſide.] He is greatly amazed.

Ergaſte low to Valere.] 'Tis my opinion, there

is nothing in it to displease you, but that some subtile mystery is concealed under it: and in short, that this message does not come from one who would destroy the love she inspires in you.

Sganarel aside.] He takes it right.

Valere low to Ergaste.] You judge it to be mysterious.

Ergaste low.] Yes—but we are observed by him; let us get out of his sight.

SCENE IV.

SGANAREL alone.

HIS confusion plainly shews that he expected no such message! But—let us call Isabella; she shews what effect education has upon the mind. So virtuous is she, that she is displeased at the very looks of a man.

SCENE V.

ISABELLA, SGANAREL.

Isabella to herself entering.

MY lover I am afraid does not understand the intention of my message, so full he is of my passion; and since I am such a prisoner, I will run the risque of another that may speak my meaning plainer.

Sganarel. Here I am returned.

Isabella. Well.

Sganarel. Your message has had its full effect; your man's business is done. At first he would not confess that his heart was sick with love, but when I assured him I came from you, he was struck

immediately dumb and confounded, and I do not think he will come any more hither.

Isabella. Ha! what do you say? I very much apprehend the contrary, and that he is again cutting out more work for us.

Sganarel. What makes you think so?

Isabella. No sooner was you got out of doors, than, putting my head out at the window to take the air, I saw a young fellow at yonder turning, who came very surprisingly, to wish me a good morning from that impertinent fellow, and flung a box directly into my chamber, in which was a letter sealed like a billet-doux.—I would immediately have thrown it back to him, but he was got to the end of the street, and my heart swells with vexation at it.

Sganarel. Observe the cunning, the knavery!

Isabella. It is my duty to send back immediately the box and letter to this woeful lover, and I shall want somebody for that purpose, for to make bold with you———

Sganarel. On the contrary, dearee, it convinces me the better of your affection and fidelity; my heart joyfully accepts the office, and I cannot express how much you oblige me by it.

Isabella. Take it then.

Sganarel. Well, let us see what he could write to you.

Isabella. O heavens! be sure not to open it.

Sganarel. For what reason?

Isabella. Would you give him the least occasion to imagine it was I?——A woman of honour ought always to avoid reading the letters a man sends her; the curiosity one then discovers, shews a secret pleasure in hearing one's self praised; and I think it

proper this letter ſhould immediately be carried to him, ſealed up as it is, that he may ſo much the better learn how I hate him; that his paſſion may not have the leaſt hope henceforward, and no more attempt the like extravagance.

Sganarel. She has certainly reaſon for what ſhe ſays.————Well, I am delighted with your virtue and diſcretion. I perceive that my inſtructions are rooted in your ſoul: and, in a word, you ſhew that you deſerve to be my wife.

Iſabella. I would not, however, balk your curioſity: you have got the letter, and you may open it.

Sganarel. Alas: I have not the leaſt curioſity; —no, your reaſons are too good for that, and I am juſt going to diſcharge the truſt you put in me; afterwards, I ſhall ſtep a little way to ſpeak a word or two, and then return to make you eaſy.

SCENE VI.

SGANAREL alone.

HOW happy am I in finding her ſuch a prudent girl! She is a treaſure of honour in my family! to take the glances of love for treaſon, receive a billet-doux as a very great injury, and ſend it back again to her gallant by me! I have a great deſire to know, whether upon ſuch an occaſion my brother's damſel would have acted thus. Faith, girls are juſt what they are taught to be—Soho. [Knocking at Valere's door.

SCENE VII.

SGANAREL, ERGASTE.

ERGASTE.

WHO is there?

Sganarel. Take this; and tell your master that he must not any more impertinently presume to write letters and send them with golden boxes, and that Isabella is very vexed at it. See, she has not so much as opened it. He will find how much she regards his passion, and what happy success he ought to expect from it.

SCENE VIII.

VALERE, ERGASTE.

VALERE.

WHAT have you got from that peevish fellow?

Ergaste. This letter, Sir, which, with this box, he pretends that Isabella received from you, and about which, he says, she is very angry. She sends it back to you without so much as opening it; read it quickly, and let us see if I am mistaken.

Valere reads.] "You will undoubtedly be surprized at this letter: and both the design of writing, and the manner of getting it to you, may be thought very rash in me: but I find myself in a situation not to observe forms any longer. The just dread of a marriage wherewith I am threatened in six days, makes me run all risques: and being resolved to free myself by some means or

" other, I believe, that I ought rather to choose " you than despair. However, you need not think " that you are wholly obliged to my evil destiny: " it is not the constraint I am under that gives birth " to the sentiments I have for you; but it is that " which makes me discover them, and forces me " to pass over those formalities which the decency " of my sex requires. It depends on yourself a- " lone to have me speedily yours, and I wait you " till you shew me what your love designs, before " I let you know the resolution I have taken: but " above all, remember that time is pressing, and " that half a word is enough for two hearts in " love."

Ergaste. Well, Sir, is not this contrivance an original? For a young creature, her understanding in this affair is not amiss. Who would imagine her capable of these love stratagems?

Valere. Ah! She is an amiable creature! This stroke of her wit and friendship even doubles my passion for her; and adds to the sentiments wherewith her beauty inspires me.

Ergaste. The ruffian is coming; consider what you must say to him.

SCENE IX.

SGANAREL, VALERE, ERGASTE.

Sganarel thinking that he was alone.

O THRICE and four time blest be this edict which prohibits extravagance in dress! The uneasiness of husbands will be no more so grievous, and wives will now be limited in their demands. Oh! how I am obliged to the king for this de-

cree! And, for the satisfaction of the said husbands, how I wish that coquettry was prohibited as well as laces and embroidery. I have bought the edict on purpose for Isabella to read to me; and that, for want of other employment, shall be our diversion by and by after supper. [seeing Valere.] Will you send love-letters with golden boxes again, Mr. Fribble? You surely thought to find some young coquette, fond of intrigues, and easily melted down by flattery; but you see with what an air your presents are received; and be assured, it is spending your powder to kill sparrows. She is discreet; she loves me; and she is affronted at your passion; away, bag and baggage, therefore, and form your designs elsewhere.

Valere. Ay, indeed, Sir, your merit, to which every body yields, is too powerful an obstacle to my addresses; and however sincere my passion be for Isabella, it is in vain to contend with you.

Sganarel. It is true, it is a folly.

Valere. Nor should I have devoted my heart to the pursuit of her beauty, could I have foreseen that this miserable heart should find a rival so formidable as you.

Sganarel. I believe it.

Valere. I now, Sir, yield to you, without murmuring, as I can no longer hope for any favour.

Sganarel. You do well.

Valere. Reason will have it so; for you are so virtuous, that I should be in the wrong to behold with an angry eye the tender sentiments Isabella has for you.

Sganarel. That is to be supposed.

Valere. Yes, yes, I yield to you. But, Sir, I beseech you, (and it is the only favour a wretched

lover begs, whose present torment you are the sole reason of:) I conjure you then, to assure Isabella, that if for three months past my soul has loved her, its passion has been pure and spotless, and never had a thought which her honour could reasonably be displeased at.

Sganarel. Ay.

Valere. That having nothing but my own inclinations to gratify, all my designs were to obtain her for a wife, if, in you, who are now the sole possessor of her heart, fate had not opposed an obstacle to this just passion.

Sganarel. Mighty well.

Valere. That, happen what will, she must not imagine I can ever forget her charms; that in what manner soever I must submit to the degrees of heaven, I am destined to love her as long as I live; and that, if any thing stifles my addresses, it is the just regard I have for your merit.

Sganarel. That is wisely said, and I am going to inform her of this discourse, at which she will not be displeased; but if you will trust to me, endeavour earnestly to drive this passion out of your head.

——— Adieu.

Ergaste. Excellent bubble!

SCENE X.

SGANAREL alone.

I AM very sorry for this poor good-natured fellow; but it was unhappy for him to think of taking a fort that I had subdued.

[Sganarel knocks at his door.

SCENE XI.

SGANAREL, ISABELLA.

SGANAREL.

NEVER did a letter returned unopened give a lover more uneasiness: his hopes, in short, are quite destroyed, and he is withdrawn: but he begged me to tell you, that in loving you, his passion has been pure and spotless, and never had a thought which could in the least displease your honour; and that having only his own inclinations to gratify, all his desires were to obtain you for a wife if fate had not, by making me possessor of your heart, opposed him; that, let what will happen, you must not imagine that he can ever erase your charms out of his mind; that whatsoever decrees of heaven he must submit to, he is destined to love you even to the latest gasp: and that, if any thing stifles his addresses, it is the just regard he has for my merit. These are his own words, and so far from blaming him, I think him an honest fellow, and pity him for loving you.

Isabella softly.] I have not been mistaken in my belief of his passion; his looks assured me always of its innocence.

Sganarel. What do you say?

Isabella. That it is unkind to me to pity a man so much whom I hate so much; and that if you loved me, as you say you do, you would be sensible how I am affronted by his addresses.

Sganarel. But he did not know your mind; and for the honesty of his intention, his love does not deserve———

Isabella. Is it a good intention, pray now, to think to run away with people? Is it acting like a man of honour to form designs of taking me from you, and marrying me by force, as if I was a creature that could bear life after such infamy being thrown upon me?

Sganarel. How?

Isabella. Yes, really, this base lover, I understand, talks of running away with me; but I cannot imagine, for my part, by what secret means he learned so soon that you intended to marry me at farthest in eight days, since it was but yesterday you told me so; but, it is reported, he will prevent that day which should unite your fate and mine.

Sganarel. That signifies nothing.

Isabella. O! pardon me; he is a very honest man, and does not retain for me——

Sganarel. He is in the wrong, and this is carrying the jest too far.

Isabella. Come, your mildness encourages his folly. If, just now, he had found you talk ill-naturedly to him, he would have been afraid of your rage and my resentment, for it is even since his letter was rejected, that he spoke of this scandalous design; and, as far as I can see, his passion makes him still imagine that my heart approves of him, that I avoid marrying, whatever the world may think of it, and that I should with joy find myself out of your clutches.

Sganarel. He is a fool.

Isabella. He knows how to disguise himself before you, and his intention is to amuse you: But be certain the traitor imposes upon you with his fair speeches. I am very unhappy, I am sure, that not-

withstanding all my endeavours to live with honour, and repulse the addresses of a vile seducer, I must be exposed to the vexation of his infamous attempts upon me.

Sganarel. Well, fear nothing.

Isabella. For my part, I assure you, that unless you shew yourself exceeding angry at so impudent an attempt, and quickly find out some way to free me from the persecutions of such a rash creature, I will give up every thing, and not endure the affronts I receive from him.

Sganarel. Come, be not so much vexed, my love; I will go find him out and tell him what you say.

Isabella. However, tell him, that it is in vain for him to deny it, for I was credibly informed of his design; and that after this notice, I dare defy him to surprise me, whatever he may atrempt. In a word, that without farther loss of time and trouble, he may be sensible what my sentiments are towards you, and that, if he would avoid making mischief, he must not want being told the same thing twice.

Sganarel. I will give him a right answer.

Isabella. But do it in such a manner that he may be sensible it comes from my very soul.

Sganarel. Fear nothing, I will tell him every thing.

Isabella. I am impatient for your return, pray make all possible haste. I languish if you are from my sight one moment.

Sganarel. Go, my heart's delight, I will return immediately.

SCENE XII.

SGANAREL alone.

IT is impoſſible to find a diſcreeter or better young woman.——Ah! how I am rejoiced in finding a wife according to my own wiſh! Ay, thus wives ought to be, and not like ſome I know, downright coquettes, that ſuffer themſelves to be courted, and make their honeſt huſbands be pointed at thro' all the town. [Knocking at Valere's door.] Soho, there, where is Valere, that enterprizing youth?

SCENE XIII.

VALERE, SGANAREL, ERGASTE.

VALERE.

WHAT brings you here now, Sir?

Sganarel. Your follies.

Valere. What do you mean?

Sganarel. You know well enough what I want to ſpeak to you about. I tell you plainly, I took you to be a more ſenſible young man than you are. You came to amuſe me with your fine ſpeeches, and ſecretly retain your own fooliſh hopes. I was inclinable to uſe you gently, but at laſt you will force me into a paſſion. Are you not aſhamed, conſidering who you are, to invent ſuch projects as you do, to intend running away with a woman of honour, and interrupting a marriage on which depends her whole happineſs?

Valere. Who told you this wonderful news, Sir?

Sganarel. You need not diſſemble. I have it

from Isabella; who, for the last time, sends you word by me, that she has plainly enough discovered to you whom she chuses; that her heart, which is wholly mine, is enraged at such an invention; that she had rather die than be so grosly insulted; and that you will occasion terrible doings, unless you put an end to all this uneasiness.

Valere. If she really said what you inform me, I confess my passion can pretend to nothing farther. These expressions are clear enough to let me see all is over, and I must revere the sentence she has passed.

Sganarel. You need not in the least doubt it. Do you imagine all the complaints I have brought from her to you are mere pretences? Would you have her come herself and tell you? If you will not believe it, follow me, you shall see if I have added any thing, and if her youthful heart is in suspense between us.

[Going to knock at his own door.

SCENE XIV.

ISABELLA, SGANAREL, VALERE, ERGASTE.

ISABELLA.

WHAT do you mean? Do you take his part, and bring him to me? Do his noble qualities charm you so much, that you will force me to love him, and endure his visits?

Sganarel. No, dearee, I set too great a value on your heart for that; but he imagines what I told him to be an errant fiction, he believes it is all my own invention, and that I cunningly represent you

full of hate towards him, and tenderneſs for me; wherefore, from your own mouth I would cure him infallibly of an error which encourages his paſſion.

Iſabella. What, does not my ſoul fully declare its meaning to you, and can you ſtill be doubtful whom I love?

Valere. Indeed, madam, I might well be ſurprized at whatever the gentleman ſaid to me from you. I was in doubt, I own, and that final ſentence which determines the fate of my unbounded paſſion, muſt be ſo ſenſibly felt by me, that you cannot be in the leaſt offended if I deſire the repetition of it.

Iſabella. No, no; you muſt not be ſurprized at ſuch a ſentence; he told you my real thoughts, and I conceive them founded on reaſon ſufficient to prove how ſincere they are. Yes indeed, I would have it known, and I ought to be credited, that fate here preſents two objects to my view, which inſpiring me with different ſentiments, agitate all the paſſions of my ſoul. One, by a reaſonable choice, whereto honour engages me, poſſeſſes all my eſteem and love; and the other, in return for his affection, has all my rage and abhorrence. I am delighted with the preſence of the one, but the ſight of the other inſpires my heart with ſecret emotions of hatred and horror. I deſire nothing better than to be the wife of the one, but I had rather loſe my life than be married to the other. But it is ſufficient that I declare my real ſentiments, and languiſh too long under theſe cruel torments; the perſon I love muſt now exert his diligence to deſtroy intirely the expectations of him I hate, and deliver me by a happy marriage from a puniſhment I dread much more than death.

Sganarel. Ay, my dearee, I intend to satisfy thy wish.

Isabella. I cannot be easy unless you do it.

Sganarel. You shall be so shortly.

Isabella. I know it is indecent for young women to declare their love so freely.

Sganarel. No, no.

Isabella. But these liberties may be allowed in the condition I am at present; and I can, without a blush, make this tender acknowledgment to him whom I already look upon as my husband.

Sganarel. Ay, my lovely child, my soul's delight.

Isabella. Then pray let him think of proving his passion for me.

Sganarel. Ay, there, kiss my hand.

Isabella. Without further courtship, let him conclude a marriage, which I earnestly desire; and accept the assurance I now give him that I will never hearken to the vows of any other person.

[She pretends to embrace Sganarel, and gives her hand to Valere to kiss.

Sganarel. Ha, ha, my pretty-face, my amiable dearee: you shall not pine very long, I promise you. Go, say no more. [To Valere.] You see she speaks freely, and loves none but me.

Valere. Well, madam, very well, your meaning is plain enough: I learn by this discourse what it is you urge me to; and ere long, I shall be able to remove from your presence him who is the occasion of so much uneasiness to you.

Isabella. You cannot oblige me more agreeably; for, in short, the sight of him is grievous to endure; I hate him, and am——

Sganarel. So so.

Iſabella. Are you diſpleaſed with what I ſay? Do I———

Sganarel. Alas! by no means, I do not ſay that; but, without lying, I pity his condition, and your averſion ſhews itſelf too violently.

Iſabella. I cannot ſhew it too much on ſuch an occaſion.

Valere. Well: you ſhall be ſatisfied; and after three days never more ſhall your eyes behold the hated object.

Iſabella. I wiſh it may be ſo. Farewel.

Sganarel. I am very ſorry for you: but——

Valere. Nay, you ſhall hear no complaint at all from me; the lady certainly does juſtice to us both, and I will endeavour to ſatisfy her wiſhes.—Farewel.

Sganarel. Unhappy youth! how much he is grieved! Come embrace me, for I am your ſecond ſelf.

SCENE XV.

ISABELLA, SGANAREL.

SGANAREL.

I THINK he is greatly to be pitied.

Iſabella. Pho! not at all.

Sganarel. I am greatly charmed with your love, my dearee, and I wiſh it was rewarded. Eight days are too long to ſtay, conſidering your impatience; I will marry you to-morrow, and will not invite-------

Iſabella. To-morrow?

Sganarel. You pretend reluctance out of mo-

deſty, but I know what joy my ſaying ſo gives you, and you wiſh it was already concluded.

Iſabella. But—

Sganarel. Let us go prepare every thing for this wedding.

Iſabella aſide.] How ſhall I now, ye gods! prevent this fatal match?

ACT III. SCENE I.

ISABELLA.

DEATH, when compared to this fatal marriage, to which I am forced, is nothing; and whatever I do to avoid the terrors of it, ought to find ſome favour with thoſe who cenſure me. Time preſſes: it is night: let me therefore go boldly, and commit my ſafety to the fidelity of a lover.

SCENE II.

SGANAREL, ISABELLA.

SGANAREL ſpeaking to the people in the houſe.

I AM returned, and to-morrow I will ſend—

Iſabella. O heaven!

Sganarel. Is it you, my love? Whither do ye go ſo late? When I went out you ſaid you was much fatigued, and would ſhut yourſelf up in your chamber: nay, you begged that I would let you be quiet at my return, and not trouble you till to-morrow morning.

Iſabella. It is true; but—

Sganarel. But what?

Iſabella. I am perplexed, you ſee, nor do I know what excuſe to make to you for it.

Sganarel. How ſo? What can this mean?

Iſabella. A wonderful ſecret: The reaſon of my going abroad at this preſent is, becauſe my ſiſter has, with a deſign for which I very much blame her, deſired my chamber of me, where I have ſhut her up.

Sganarel. For what purpoſe?

Iſabella. Why, this very youth whom we have diſcarded is beloved by her.

Sganarel. Who? Valere?

Iſabella. She is deſperately in love with him. Her coming to me at this hour of the night to diſcloſe her paſſion plainly ſhews how violent it is: ſhe ſays that ſhe ſhall certainly die if ſhe does not obtain what ſhe ſo much deſires; that their amour has been carried on above a year; and that they made each other mutual promiſes of marriage at the very beginning of their fondneſs.

Sganarel. A villain!

Iſabella. That being informed to what deſpair I have driven the man ſhe loves, ſhe came to beg I would ſuffer her paſſion, to prevent a ſeparation which would much grieve her, and allow her to entertain her galant this evening in my name at my chamber window which looks into the little ſtreet, where, counterfeiting my voice, ſhe may talk a little kindly to him, and thereby tempt his ſtay; in ſhort, that ſhe may dexterouſly manage to her own advantage the regard he is known to have for me.

Sganarel. And can you imagine that----

Iſabella. For my part, I am provoked at it. What, ſiſter, ſaid I, are you out of your wits? Are you

not ashamed to be thus in love with a man who is inconstant, and changes every day? To forget your sex, and deceive the hopes of a man whom heaven has appointed for you?

Sganarel. He well deserves it, and I am very glad of it.

Isabella. In short, I used every method to dissuade her from making such a request; but she begged so earnestly, wept and sighed to such a degree, and told me that I would drive her to despair if I denied to gratify her passion, that I was obliged to yield; and to justify this night's intrigue, which a tenderness for my own blood made me give way to, I was going to get Lucretia to come and lie with me, who is so much praised by you for her virtue; but your speedy return has greatly surprized me.

Sganarel. No, no, I will not have this juggling at my house; I could agree to it so far as it concerns my brother, but they may be seen by somebody in the street, and she whom I honour with my person should not only be modest and well-bred, but she must not even be suspected. Let us go turn out the shameless creature; and for her passion---

Isabella. For God's sake do not do that; you will greatly confound her, and she may justly complain how badly I can keep a secret. As you will not allow me to countenance her design, stay here at least till I let her out.

Sganarel. Well then, do so.

Isabella. But above all things conceal yourself, I beseech you, and let her go without speaking one word to her.

Sganarel. Well, for thy sake I will restrain my

wrath; but as ſoon as ſhe is gone, I will go and tell the whole affair to my brother.

Iſabella. Pray do not mention my name. Good night to you, for I am going to ſhut myſelf up this moment.

Sganarel. Until to-morrow, dearee. [Alone.] How impatient am I to ſee my brother, and inform him of this accident? The good man is bubbled, with all his wiſdom, and I would not be without this diſcovery for an hundred crowns.

Iſabella in the houſe.] Yes, ſiſter, I am ſorry to incur your diſpleaſure, but it is impoſſible for me to gratify you; my honour, which is dear to me, runs too great a riſque by it; farewell; begone immediately.

Sganarel. There ſhe goes; ſhe's a ſweet baggage, I warrant ye: let us lock the door, for fear ſhe ſhould come back again.

Iſabella entering.] Deſert me not, good heavens! in my enterprize.

Sganarel aſide.] Whither can ſhe be going? I will follow her a little.

Iſabella aſide.] The night, however, favours me in my diſtreſs.

Sganarel aſide.] To Valere's lodgings! What a gypſey is this!

SCENE III.

VALERE, ISABELLA, SGANAREL.

VALERE coming out haſtily.

YES, yes, I will try ſome way this very night to ſpeak—Who is there?

Iſabella. Softly, Valere, it is Iſabella who now

ſpeaks to you, therefore trouble yourſelf no farther.

Sganarel. You lie, huſſy, it is not ſhe. She follows cloſely thoſe laws of honour which you forſake, and you aſſume falſely both her name and voice.

Iſabella. But if I thought that you would not by the moſt ſacred ties—

Valere. Indeed, that is the only purpoſe of my deſtiny; and I here ſolemnly declare to you, that to-morrow, I will go where-ever you pleaſe to perform the ceremony.

Sganarel aſide.] Poor ſelf-cozened fool!

Valere. Go in, and fear nothing: I now defy your fantaſtical guardian's power; and ſooner ſhall this arm pierce his heart, than he ſhall again be in poſſeſſion of thee.

SCENE IV.

SGANAREL alone.

I Have not the leaſt inclination, I aſſure you, to take from you ſuch a ſcandalous gypſey, enſlaved to her paſſion; your promiſe to her does not make me jealous, and you have my free conſent to take her. Ay, let us catch him with this impudent creature: the memory of her father, well worthy of reſpect, together with the great intereſt I have in her ſiſter, requires my endeavours at leaſt to preſerve her honour.—Scho!

[Knocking at a commiſſary's door.

SCENE V.

SGANAREL, the COMMISSARY, the NOTARY, Attendant with a Flambeau.

COMMISSARY.

WHO is there?

Sganarel. Your servant, Mr. Commissary; we want a cast of your office; please to follow me with your light.

Commissary. We are going to—

Sganarel. The affair is in great haste.

Commissary. What is it?

Sganarel. To go in there, and surprize two people together, who must be honestly married: it is a girl of ours whom a youth called Valere has deceived, and got into his house by promising her marriage; she is descended from a noble and virtuous family, but—

Commissary. If it is for that, our meeting is very lucky, for here is a Notary with us.

Sganarel. Sir.

Notary. Yes, Sir, a public Notary.

Commissary. And also a man of honour.

Sganarel. That is to be supposed. Go in at the door, make no noise, but mind that no body gets out: you shall be fully satisfied for your pains: but do not suffer yourselves to be greased in the fist however.

Commissary. How? Do you imagine that officers of justice—

Sganarel. I do not say it as a reflection upon your office. I will fetch my brother hither this

moment. Let the flambeau light me. [Aside.] I will go congratulate this Solomon. Soho.

[Knocking at Ariſto's door.

SCENE VI.

ARISTO, SGANAREL.

ARISTO.

WHO knocks?—Oh! brother, what brings you here at this time of the night?

Sganarel. Come along, poor ſuperannuated fop, I will ſhew you ſomething that is pretty.

Ariſto. What do you mean?

Sganarel. I bring you good news.

Ariſto. What is it?

Sganarel. Where is your Leonora, pray?

Ariſto. What is the reaſon of your aſking? She is at a friend's houſe, I believe, at a ball.

Sganarel. Hey! ay, ay, follow me: you ſhall ſee what kind of ball ſhe is at.

Ariſto. I do not underſtand you.

Sganarel. She now plainly maketh it appear how well you have brought her up. It is cruel to be conſtantly finding fault; the mind is eaſily won by gentleneſs; and neither maids nor wives are rendered virtuous by bolts, grates, and diſtruſtful cares. The ſex requires a little liberty, and by ſeverity we occaſion them to do amiſs. She has really taken her ſill of it, a cunning baggage, and virtue with her is grown exceeding gentle.

Ariſto. I cannot in the leaſt apprehend what you mean by this diſcourſe.

Sganarel. Come, Mr. Elder-brother of mine, it is what you well deſerve; and I would not for

twenty piſtoles, but that you ſhould have this fruit of your ſilly maxims. It is plain what effect our inſtructions have produced on two ſiſters: one ſhuns galants, and the other runs after them.

Ariſto. If you do not ſpeak plainer I cannot—

Sganarel. Why then you muſt know, that her ball is at Valere's, that I myſelf ſaw her go thither, not an hour ago, and that he juſt now has her in his arms.

Ariſto. Who?

Sganarel. Leonora.

Ariſto. Leave off your bantering, I beſeech you.

Sganarel. Bantering! it is very good to hear him talk of bantering: poor ſoul! I tell you again and again, that your Leonora is juſt now with Valere, and that they were engaged by a mutual promiſe before he thought of following Iſabella.

Ariſto. So improbable is this ſtory, that----

Sganarel. He will not believe it, though he ſees it. It makes me mad. When people are defective here, years avail nothing.

[Pointing to his forehead.

Ariſto. Do you think, brother, that----

Sganarel. No, no, only follow me, your mind ſhall preſently be made eaſy. You ſhall ſee if I impoſe upon you, and if they have not been contracted for more than a year paſt.

Ariſto. Is it likely ſhe ſhould conſent to this engagement without apprizing me of it! me, who always from her infancy upon every occaſion have practiſed towards her a compliance, and have times innumerable told her that I would never force her inclinations, but let her chuſe whom ſhe pleaſed!

Sganarel. In ſhort, your own eyes ſhall judge of the matter: I have already fetched a Commiſ-

ſary and a Notary, it is our intereſt that the honour ſhe has loſt ſhould be repaired upon the ſpot by marriage; for I do not imagine you will be ſo mean-ſpirited as to make her your wife with this ſtain upon her, unleſs you have ſome new arguments toplace you above ridicule.

Ariſto. I ſhall never, I hope, be ſo weak, as to deſire to poſſeſs a heart which inclines more to any other perſon than to me. Nevertheleſs, I cannot believe———

Sganarel. What a talking you make! come along, this diſpute would laſt for ever.

SCENE VII.

COMMISSARY, NOTARY, SGANAREL, ARISTO.

COMMISSARY.

IF you deſire that they ſhould be married, gentlemen, you need make uſe of no compulſion, for they are both equally inclined to it. And, as to what concerns you, Valere has given it under his hand already, that he deſigns for his wife her who now is with him.

Ariſto. The girl———

Commiſſary. She is locked up, and unleſs you promiſe to gratify their deſires, will not ſtir a foot.

SCENE VIII.

VALERE, COMMISSARY, NOTARY, SGANAREL, ARISTO.

VALERE at the window.

NOT a soul shall enter here, gentlemen, till you let me know what you want. You know very well who I am, and I have done my part in signing the instrument, which they may shew you: if you intend to consent to the match, you must likewise set your hand to a confirmation of it; but, if not, depend upon it, you shall kill me sooner than take from me the object of my love.

Sganarel. Nay, we do not design to separate you from her. [Aside] He is still ignorant who it is that he has got, he thinks it is Isabella; let us take advantage of his error.

Aristo to Valere.] But is that Leonora?

Sganarel to Aristo.] Hold your tongue.

Aristo. But—

Sganarel. Be quiet.

Aristo. I would know—

Sganarel. What, again? hold your tongue, I tell you.

Valere. In short, whatever be the consequence, Isabella has my solemn promise, as I have her's, and I am not a match, considering every thing, which you shall be admitted to disapprove.

Aristo to Sganarel.] What he says is not—

Sganarel. Hold your tongue: I have a reason for it: and you shall know the secret. Well, without any more ado we both agree that you are to marry her who is now with you.

Commiſſary. The thing is drawn in thoſe terms, and a blank is left for the name, as we did not ſee her—Come, ſign, the lady will make you all agree afterwards.

Valere. I conſent to it in that way.

Sganarel. I am very fond of it, for my part: [Aſide.] We ſhall have fine diverſion preſently. Here, brother, you have the honour to ſet your name firſt.

Ariſto. But why all this myſtery----

Sganarel. Pox take your impudence! Come, ſign your name, you fool.

Ariſto. He talks of Iſabella, and you of Leonora.

Sganarel. Do not you conſent, brother, if it is her, to allow them to make their nuptial promiſes good?

Ariſto. Certainly.

Sganarel. Sign then, and I will do ſo too.

Ariſto. So let it be, I do not underſtand it.

Sganarel. You ſhall be informed of the affair.

Commiſſary. We will be back again ſoon.

Sganarel to Ariſto.] Well, now I will tell you the ſubtlety of this intrigue.

[They retire to the farther part of the ſtage.

SCENE IX.

LEONORA, SGANAREL, ARISTO, LISETTA.

LEONORA.

HOW I have been plagued with the impertinence of theſe young coxcombs!

They obliged me to slip away from the ball privately.

Lisetta. They all endeavoured to make themselves agreeable to you.

Leonora. In short, I never met with any thing more troublesome, and would be much happier in the meanest conversation, than in all their flattering discourses: they imagine all must be given up to their powdered periwigs; they think themselves the wisest people in the world, when, with a stupid banteriug tone, they rally one in a silly manner about the love of an old man: but I set more value upon the affections of such an old man, than all the giddy raptures of a young fellow. But I see---

Sganarel to Aristo.] Well, the affair stands in this manner. [seeing Leonora.] O! yonder she comes, attended by her maid.

Aristo. I am not angry, Leonora, but have reason to complain: you are sensible I never laid any restraint upon you, and have a hundred times told you, that you should gratify your own wishes; and notwithstanding this, your heart has engaged itself, both by promise and affection, without my knowledge. I do not repent the indulgence I have given you, but your behaviour affects me sensibly; my fondness for you did not deserve this return.

Leonora. I do not understand the reason of your talking in this manner; but you may be certain I am the same I ever was; nothing can lessen my esteem for you: I should think it a crime to have a regard for any other person, and if you are willing to compleat my wishes, the sacred knot shall make us one to-morrow.

Aristo. Upon what foundation then, brother, came you----

Sganarel. What! have not you come from Valere's lodgings? Have you not been in love with him for a year past, and declared your passion for him this very day?

Leonora. Who has taken the pains to invent such lies, and given you this account of me?

SCENE THE LAST.

ISABELLA, VALERE, LEONORA, ARISTO, SGANAREL, COMMISSARY, NOTARY, LISETTA, ERGASTE.

ISABELLA.

I HOPE, sister, you will forgive me freely, if by the liberty I have taken I may have hurt your character. I was forced into that scandalous contrivance by the confusion the great surprize put me into. Fate deals very differently with you and me. Your example condemns my passion. [to Sganarel.] I will make no apology to you, Sir, as I am doing you a piece of service, rather than using you ill. I found myself unworthy of your love, and chose rather to give myself to another, than prove unworthy of such an heart as yours; heaven never intended us for each other.

Valere to Sganarel.] To receive her from your hands, Sir, is happiness and glory.

Aristo. Indeed, brother, nobody will be sorry for you, though they know you are cheated; your own behaviour is the occasion of it, and you must submit to it peaceably.

Lisetta. This reward of his mistrust is an exemplary stroke, and I am very glad of it.

Leonora. For my part, I cannot blame this stra-

tagem; I do not know whether it ſhould be commended or not.

Ergaſte. He is a lucky fellow to eſcape being a cuckold, when his ſtars expoſed him to the danger of it.

Sganarel. Really I cannot recover myſelf from my aſtoniſhment; this deviliſh trick confuſes my underſtanding: after this, he that truſts in women is wretched. I believe the devil himſelf could not be ſo wicked as this jilt; I thought that I could have engaged my life that ſhe would never have behaved ſo. Women are continually hatching miſchief; they were made for a curſe to the world. I give up the treacherous ſex, for ever, and wiſh them all at the devil heartily.

Ergaſte. Well ſaid.

Ariſto. Let us all go to my houſe. Come, Mr. Valere, to-morrow we will endeavour to appeaſe his rage.

Liſetta to the audience.

You who churliſh huſbands know that want mending,
Ours is the ſchool to which you may ſend them.

THE END.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

A

COMEDY.

The SCHOOL *for* WIVES, *a Comedy of Five Acts, acted at Paris, at the Theatre of the Palace-Royal, December 26th, 1662.*

AT the first representation of the SCHOOL for WIVES, all Paris flocked to Moliere's Theatre; however, the immense number of spectators could not secure him against several criticisms being published against his piece, though it afforded him comfort in it. So inveterate were they against it, that they took notice of the smallest neglects, and exclaimed against the slightest faults; but the most essential of all was overlooked, I mean some dangerous images in it, which should always be banished from the stage. But if we consider only how artfully the piece is contrived, we cannot but confess, that this comedy is one of the most excellent productions of human genius. The repeated confidence which Horace places in the jealous Arnolph, who, notwithstanding all his precautions, was always duped by a silly innocent young girl; the excellent character of Agnes, the humour of the under characters which were chosen to attend her, together with the natural and quick transition from one surprize to another, are excellent comic productions. What distinguishes the SCHOOL for WIVES still more particularly is, that the whole appears to be related, and yet at the same time is all in action; a species of comedy of which neither the ancient nor modern stages have given us the least model. Every relation, by its proximity to the incident which gave occasion to it, traces it over again in so lively a manner, that the spectator thinks him-

ſelf preſent at it, and by a peculiar advantage which the relation of this piece has over the action, we enjoy the effect which the fact produces, at the ſame time that we learn it; for the perſon who is concerned to be inſtructed learns every thing which there is the greateſt reaſon ſhould be concealed from him. The great reſemblance which appears in the SCHOOL for HUSBANDS and the SCHOOL for WIVES, with regard to Sganarel and Arnolph being both deceived by the very meaſures they took to prevent it, muſt turn to Moliere's reputation, who diſcovered the ſecret of varying what appeared to be ſo much alike. The ſubtil ſtrokes of Iſabella, which ſprang from no other principle but the conſtraint her guardian kept her under, are very different from thoſe natural ones of the witty Agnes, who offended againſt decorums only becauſe Arnolph had kept her in ignorance of them.

ACTORS.

ARNOLPH, otherwiſe Mr. de la Souche.
AGNES, daughter to Henriques.
HORACE, lover to Agnes.
CHRISALDUS, Arnolph's confident.
HENRIQUES, brother-in-law to Chriſaldus.
ORONTES, Horace's father, and a friend to Arnolph.
A NOTARY.
ALLEN, a country fellow, Arnolph's man.
GEORGETTA, a country girl, Arnolph's maid.

SCENE PARIS, a ſquare in the ſuburbs.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

ACT. I. SCENE I.

CHRISALDUS, ARNOLPH.

CHRISALDUS.

YOU are come to marry her, you say?

Arnolph. Yes, to-morrow I will finish the affair.

Chrisaldus. We are alone here, and I dare say, may speak freely, without being heard by any body. Would you have me to speak sincerely as a friend? Your intentions make me anxious for you, for I think it a piece of madness in you to marry, in whatever light you may consider it.

Arnolph. I believe it is true, my friend. Probably your own experience makes you apprehensive for me; perhaps your brows make you imagine, that matrimony and horns are inseparable.

Chrisaldus. Accidents of that sort nobody can avoid, and it appears to me very foolish for people

to be so careful about it. My uneasiness for you is on account of the raillery which a thousand husbands indure the sting of. You know very well that every body suffers by your reflexions, and to exclaim against secret intrigues, has been your greatest delight in every place you go.

Arnolph. Very well. Are husbands so tame any where as in this city? We see them of every degree treated at home with disrespect. One heaps up riches, which his wife can dispose of to a person who is endeavouring to make a cuckold of him; another, not less infamous, but more easy, sees his wife accept of presents every day, and is not in the least uneasy, as she tells him it is out of respect for her virtue. One makes a great bustle, which serves but to little purpose: another, quite easy, sees the spark visit at his house, walks out, and lets affairs take their course. One wife, with female cunning, pretends to make a confident of her faithful husband, who sleeps quietly under the delusion, pitying the poor galant for giving himself the trouble —which answers his intentions. Another, to avoid the appearance of extravagance, pretends the money she expends is won at play, and the poor weak husband returns God thanks for it, without suspecting at what game she wins it. In short, you will find these subjects of ridicule every where, and may not I as a looker on laugh at them? May not I amongst our fools——

Chrisaldus. Very true; but he who makes a jest of another, may be afraid of being laughed at himself. I hear what the people say, how they amuse themselves with tattling things that happen; but whatever is discovered in places where I am, no body ever heard me rejoice at them. I am close

enough in that respect; and if I happened on these occasions to think certain degrees of forbearance wrong, and my intention were not to suffer what some husbands bear quietly, yet I never attempted to say this; for after all, it is to be dreaded that satire will come home, and a person should never say positively that he would do so and so, in such a case. By which means, if fate should destine my brows to a disgrace of that sort, my behaviour would induce people to pity me, or, at least, privately to laugh at me. But, my dear friend, your case would differ widely, and I really think you run a very great risk, as you have always been ready to ridicule tame husbands. In short, you have been a devil let loose upon them, and to avoid being a subject of jest, you must walk upright indeed: if they get the smallest hold of you, they will make your shame public, even at the market-cross. And—

Arnolph. Alas! friend, do not give yourself any trouble about that point. He must be very cunning indeed who catches me. The person I am to marry is so innocent, that my forehead cannot be in any danger. I know all the artful contrivances, and the stratagems they fall upon to plant horns upon us.

Chrisaldus. Hey, what do you pretend? that a a fool, in one word———

Arnolph. A person is no fool, to marry an ignorant wife. I believe, as a good christian, your other half to be very wise, but an artful wife is a very bad presage, and I am sensible what certain people have lost by marrying women with great abilities. Shall I plague myself with the care of a witty wife, who loves to talk of nothing but the ring and the drawing room? who can write ten-

der things both in verſe and proſe? who is viſited by the marquiſes and the wits, while I, under the name of the lady's huſband, am like a ſaint, whom nobody calls upon? No, no, none of your high flown genius's for me; a woman who writes, underſtands more than ſhe ſhould do. I intend mine with ſo little of the ſublime in her, that ſhe ſhall be ignorant what rhime is. If one happen to play at the baſket with her, and in one's turn aſk her, what is put into it? Let her anſwer be, a cream-tart. In ſhort, I would chuſe to have her very ignorant: to ſay the truth, it is enough if ſhe can love me, know how to ſew, ſpin, and ſay her prayers.

Chriſaldus. Then your choice would be a ſtupid wife?

Arnolph. I would prefer an ugly fool to a handſome wit.

Chriſaldus. And wit——

Arnolph. Virtue is enough.

Chriſaldus. After all, a fool may not know what it is to be virtuous; and I ſhould think it very inſipid to live all one's life with a fool. To be ſerious, even that will not ſecure one from horns: a ſenſible woman may deviate from her duty, but ſhe muſt do it knowingly; whereas a fool, without ever thinking of it, may fail in the common courſe of her's.

Arnolph. I will anſwer as Pantagruel did to Panurgus, to this fine argument. Endeavour to prevail upon me to marry a wealthy woman, and talk from January to June, when you are done you will be amazed, that all your advice is to no purpoſe.

Chriſaldus. I will ſay no more to you on that ſubject.

Arnolph. Every one to his own way. In a wife, as in other things, I will follow my own humour. I have money enough, and can afford to marry a woman that has nothing, whose dependence upon me will prevent her from reproaching me either with her birth or fortune. When I first saw her amongst the children, her grave and mild look inspired me with a love for her, though she was then but four years old. Her mother was in a very low station, and I thought I would beg her from her; and the good woman very readily gave up her charge. I had her brought up at a little convent, according to my own directions, distant from all company. I desired them to use all their endeavours to make her as great an idiot as they could. Thank heaven they succeeded to my wish, and as she grew up, I found her silly, and was thankful for it. I brought her home, but as my house is always open to a hundred sorts of people, (precaution being always necessary) I have her placed out of the way in this other house, that her agreeable disposition may not be spoiled by people who come to visit me: I have no body near her but people as ignorant as herself. You will be surprized at my troubling you with so long a story, but it is to acquaint you with the care I have taken———And I invite you this evening, as a faithful friend, to sup with her: observe her well, and you will certainly approve my choice.

Chrisaldus. I will.

Arnolph. And by this conversation you will judge of both her innocence and person.

Chrisaldus. As to that article, what you have told me cannot———

Arnolph. The description I give you, is even

short of the truth. Her simplicity on all occasions is admirable; I am often like to die with laughing at some questions she asks. The other day, (could you suppose it?) she was uneasy, and with an ignorance which nothing can equal, came to ask me if children come into the world by the ear.

Chrisaldus. It gives me pleasure, Mr. Arnolph—

Arnolph. How! Will you always give me that name?

Chrisaldus. I really cannot avoid it, it comes always into my mouth; and I never think of Mr. de la Souche. What the deuce has put it into your head to change your name, at forty-two years of age; to take a title from an old rotten stump belonging to your farm?

Arnolph. Besides the house being known by that name, la Souche is a more agreeable name to me.

Chrisaldus. It is shameful to give up the name of one's ancestors, to take another founded on fancy; and yet it is the whim of a great many people, without mentioning you. I know a country fellow, named sat Peter, who had only a quarter of an acre of land, he made a muddy ditch round it, and assumed the name of Mr. de L'Isle.

Arnolph. Repeat none of those instances: if you call me by any other name than la Souche, you will disoblige me; I have a pleasure in it, and will be called so.

Chrisaldus. Few people will submit to it, and I still see the directions of your letters———

Arnolph. From those who are not acquainted with it I bear it easily, but for you———

Chrisaldus. Be it so. We shall not differ about

that; I will accuſtom myſelf to ſay Mr. de la Souche.

Arnolph. Farewel. I knock here only to ſay good-morrow, and acquaint them that I am returned.

Chriſaldus aſide, going away.] Really I think him an accompliſhed fool.

Arnolph alone.] He is a little touched as to ſome particular things. It is ſurprizing to ſee how much every man is wedded to his own opinion!

[Knocking at his door.] Soho.

SCENE II.

ARNOLPH, ALLEN and GEORGETTA in the houſe.

ALLEN.

WHO is there?

Arnolph. Open the door. [aſide.] They will be very well pleaſed to ſee me, I ſuppoſe, after ten days abſence.

Allen. Who knocks?

Arnolph. I.

Allen. Georgetta.

Georgetta. Well.

Allen. Open the door below there.

Georgetta. Do it yourſelf.

Allen. You go do it.

Georgetta. I will not go, indeed.

Allen. Nor will I go.

Arnolph. A pretty ſort of ceremony, while I am ſtanding without!—Soho, ſoho there; pray—

Georgetta. Who knocks at the door?

Arnolph. Your maſter.

Georgetta. Allen.

Allen. What do ye ſay?

Georgetta. It is my maſter. Open the door immediately.

Allen. Do you open it.

Georgetta. I am blowing the fire.

Allen. I cannot ſtir, leſt my ſparrow ſhould get out, and the cat eat it.

Arnolph. Which ever of you two will not open the door, ſhall not have a bit of victuals for above theſe four days.

Georgetta. What occaſion have you to come, when I am going?

Allen. Why you more than I? A fine contrivance truly!

Georgetta. Stand out of the way.

Allen. I will not, ſtand you out of the way.

Georgetta. I will open the door.

Allen. And I will open it.

Georgetta. You ſhall not open it.

Allen. No more ſhall you

Georgetta. Nor you.

Arnolph. I had need have great patience here.

Allen entering] However, it is my buſineſs, Sir.

Georgetta entering.] I am your ſervant for that; it is mine.

Allen. Was it not out of reſpect to my maſter here, I'd———

Arnolph receiving a blow from Allen.] Plague!

Allen. I beg your pardon.

Arnolph. See that loggerhead there.

Allen. She is ſo too, Sir———

Arnolph. Hold your tongues, and mind what I am going to ſay to you. How are all here?

Allen. Why Sir, we we—[Arnolph pulls off

Allen's hat three times.] Sir, we we are——thank God—— we we——

Arnolph. Fooliſh blockhead, who taught you to talk to me with your hat upon your head?

Allen. You do well, Sir, I was in the wrong.

Arnolph to Allen.] Tell Agnes to come down to me.

SCENE III.

ARNOLPH, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH.

WHEN I was away did ſhe appear melancholy?

Georgetta. Melancholy? No.

Arnolph. No!

Georgetta. Yes, yes.

Arnolph. Why then-------

Georgetta. Yes ſhe was; ſhe expected you every moment, and never a horſe, mule, or aſs paſſed by which ſhe did not take for you.

SCENE IV.

ARNOLPH, AGNES, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH.

HER work in her hand is a good ſign—— Well, Agnes, are you glad to ſee me come back again?

Agnes, Yes, Sir, thank heaven.

Arnolph. And I too am glad to ſee you again.

Your face plainly shews you have been well since I went from home.

Agnes. Fleas have disturbed me very much in the night.

Arnolph. O, in a little time you shall have some body to catch them for you.

Agnes. You will do me a kindness.

Arnolph. So I can easily imagine. What are you about there?

Agnes. I am making myself some head-clothes. Your night-shirts and caps are done.

Arnolph. Very well, go up stairs again, I will be with you presently, and will discourse with you about some affairs of consequence.

SCENE V.

ARNOLPH alone.

THIS modest and virtuous ignorance far surpasses all your knowledge, your romances, your verses, and your love-letters, ye learned ladies, and heroines of the age. One ought not to be tempted by riches; and provided a girl be virtuous——

SCENE VI.

HORACE, ARNOLPH.

ARNOLPH.

WHO is this I see? Is it he?—Ay. I am mistaken. No, no. But it is. Nay, it is he himself. Hor——

Horace. Mr. Ar——

Arnolph. Horace.

Horace. Arnolph.

Arnolph. O, joy extreme! How long have you been here?

Horace. Nine days.

Arnolph. Really———

Horace. As ſoon as I came I went to your houſe, but you was not to be found.

Arnolph. I was in the country.

Horace. Ay, you had been gone two days.

Arnolph. What an alteration a few years make in children! I am ſurprized to find him grown ſo, after having known him when he was ſo little.

Horace. You ſee how it is.

Arnolph. But, pray, how does my dear friend Orontes your father, whom I reſpect and revere? Is he hearty ſtill? He knows I bear a part in every thing which concerns him; it is four years ſince we ſaw each other, and a letter has not paſſed between us all that time.

Horace. He is even heartier than we are, Mr. Arnolph:—I have got a letter for you from him: but by another ſince he ſends me word of his own coming, though I am yet ignorant of the reaſon of it.—Do you know who of your townſmen it ſhould be, that is upon his return hither with immenſe riches, which he has been fourteen years acquiring in the Weſt-Indies?

Arnolph. No. Did you hear his name?

Horace. Henriques.

Arnolph. No.

Horace. My father ſpeaks to me of him and his return, as if I was perfectly acquainted with him; and writes me word they are ſetting out together upon an important affair, which his letter does not mention.

[Giving Orontes's letter to Arnolph.

Arnolph. I shall certainly be extremely glad to see him, and will do every thing in my power to entertain him. [After having read the letter.] Letters amongst friends should be less ceremonious; all these compliments are superfluous; you might freely have used my fortune, without his taking the pains to write to me on that score.

Horace. I am one who take people at their word: and I have just now occasion for an hundred pistoles.

Arnolph. Why really you oblige me in making use of me in this manner, and I am glad I have got them ready for you;—take purse and all.

Horace. It must———

Arnolph. Let us talk about something else, and drop this discourse. Well, what do you think of this city?

Horace. Its inhabitants are numerous, its buildings very magnificent, and I believe its diversions admirable.

Arnolph. Every man has his pleasures suitable to his taste; but as for those people, who go under the name of galants, they have all they can desire in this country; for the women are made for coquettry, you will find them of gentle temper, both the fair and the brown, and the husbands are withal the most complaisant creatures you ever saw. It is an entertainment for a king, it is a meer comedy to me to see the pranks I do.—You have perhaps already smitten some-body.—Have you had no luck yet? people formed like you are of more value than gold;—you are of a shape to be a cuckold-maker.

Horace. Why, to tell you the truth, I have had

here a certain love adventure, and I am obliged in friendſhip to acquaint you with it.

Arnolph aſide.] Very well, here is ſome new waggiſh ſtory to minute down in my pocket-book.

Horace. However, I beg you would not tell it to any body.

Arnolph. Oh!

Horace. You are not ignorant that on theſe occaſions, if a ſecret gets air it fruſtrates all our deſigns. I will freely tell you then, that my heart is captivated by a certain young lady in this city. My ſmall endeavours have immediately had ſo much ſucceſs, that I have obtained a free admittance to her; and without boaſting of myſelf too much, or in the leaſt injuring her, my affairs with her are in a mighty good poſture.

Arnolph laughing.] Ha, ha, who is it?

Horace pointing to Agnes's lodging.] A very charming young creature, who lives in that brick houſe there. Simple indeed ſhe is, through the matchleſs folly of a man who ſhuts her up from all company; but amidſt that ignorance to which he would enſlave her, ſhe diſplays charms that would throw one into raptures; an air moſt engaging, and I know not what of tenderneſs, which no heart is proof againſt. But, perhaps you have often ſeen this young ſtar of love, adorned with ſuch numberleſs perfections. Agnes is her name.

Arnolph aſide.] Oh! I burſt.

Horace. As for the man, it is I think la Zouſſe, or Source, that they call him; no matter which He is rich by what they told me, but not overwiſe. They talked to me of him as a ridiculous fellow. Are you acquainted with him?

Arnolph aſide.] A bitter pill!

Horace. Why do not you answer?

Arnolph. O, ay——I know him.

Horace. He is a fool, is not he?

Arnolph. Heh——

Horace. How now? what do you say to it? Heh! that means yes. Ridiculously jealous: Fool? I find he is just as I was told. In short, the lovely Agnes has made a conquest of me; to tell you the truth, she is a lovely creature, and it would be a sin to let a beauty so extraordinary remain in the power of this fantastical old fellow. For my part, all my endeavours, all my most passionate wishes are, to make her mine, notwithstanding this jealous wretch; and the money I was so free to borrow of you, is for no other purpose but to bring about this laudable enterprise. You know better than I, that money does every thing in such undertakings; and that it procures the victory in love as well as war. But methinks you do not seem pleased: does my scheme displease you?

Arnolph. No, I was considering——

Horace. You are tired with this conversation: Farewell. I will come presently to your house, to thank you.

Arnolph thinking himself alone.] What! must it——

Horace coming back.] Once more, I beg you would take care, and not let any one know what I have been saying to you.

Arnolph thinking himself alone] What my soul now feels——

Horace coming back.] Especially my father, who would perhaps be angry at it.

Arnolph thinking he will come back again.] Oh!— [alone.] Oh! what have I suffered during

this discourse! never was any body so vexed as I have been! With what imprudence and what extremehaste he came to give an account of this business to me myself! Though my other name keeps him in an error, yet did ever any hair-brains run on so furiously? but having suffered so much, I should have been more peaceable, till I had discovered what I have reason to apprehend; I should have encouraged his foolish babbling, by which I might thoroughly have informed myself of what is carrying on privately between them. I will endeavour to join him again, he is not got far, I believe, and get out of him the whole secret of this matter. I tremble for fear of the misfortune that may befal me by so doing; we often seek after what we would not find.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ARNOLPH.

MY missing the way he went is really very lucky, for I do not think I could have concealed my perturbation of mind, which I am not willing he should know at present. But I am not a man that can put up this matter, and leave the spark at liberty to pursue his design. I am resolved to frustrate it, and be informed how matters have been carried on between them. I take it, that my honour is deeply concerned therein: as the case stands, I consider her as a wife already. I shall be blamed, and no one else, for whatever

she does amiss. O wretched journey! unhappy absence!

[Knocking at the door.

SCENE II.

ARNOLPH, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ALLEN.

AH! Sir, this time——

Arnolph. Be quiet. Come hither both of ye: That way, that way. Come along, come along, I say.

Georgetta. Ah! you frighten me! my blood runs chill in my veins!

Arnolph. Is this the way you have obeyed me in my absence? and have you both betrayed me by agreement?

Georgetta falling at Arnolph's feet.] Oh! pray, Sir, do not eat me.

Allen aside.] I am certain some mad dog has bit him.

Arnolph aside.] Ugh! I cannot speak I came so fast, I am stifled; would I could throw off all my clothes. [To Allen and Georgetta.] Ye base vipers, you have suffered a man to come then, have ye—What, would you run away?—You must this instant—if you stir— I will have you tell me. Ugh! Ay, I will have you both—S'death! stir not a foot, else I will kill you—How came that man into my house? Heh!—speak, [panting.] make haste, quick, dispatch, in a moment, without considering; will ye tell me?

Allen and Georgetta. Oh! Oh!

Georgetta falling at Arnolph's feet.] I swoon.

Allen falling at Arnolph's feet.] I die.

Arnolph aside.] I am all over in a sweat: Let me breathe a little. I must walk and cool myself. Could I have imagined when I saw him a little one, that he would grow up for this! Heavens! what my heart endures! It would be better I think to draw from her own mouth by kind usage an account of what concerns me. Let me try to moderate my passion. Softly, my heart, be not in such a flutter. [To Allen and Georgetta.] Rise, get ye in, and tell Agnes to come to me. Stay. [Aside.] They will go tell her the uneasiness I am under, and she will be the less surprised. I will fetch her out myself. [To Allen and Georgetta.] Wait here for me.

SCENE III.

ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

GEORGETTA.

WHAT a frightful look he has! I never saw a man appear so terrible.

Allen. That gentleman has angered him, I told you so.

Georgetta. I cannot imagine what makes him conceal our young lady so much, and will not let her see any company.

Allen. It is because this affair makes him jealous.

Georgetta. But how comes this fancy into his head?

Allen. It comes—it comes, because he is jealous.

Georgetta. Ay; but what makes him so? and why this passion?

Allen. It is because jealousy . . . do ye understand me right, Georgetta? is a thing—which makes people uneasy—and drives them all round the house. I will give you a comparison, that you may conceive it better. Now tell me sincerely, when you have got a mess of porridge, if some greedy gut should come to eat it from you, would it not vex you, and make you ready to beat him?

Georgetta. Ah, I understand that.

Allen. It is just in the same manner. Woman really is a man's porridge; and when a man sees other people endeavouring to dip their fingers in his porridge, he flies immediately into a rage.

Georgetta. Ay; but why does not every body do so alike? What is the reason that some husbands appear pleased, when their wives are in company with fine gentlemen?

Allen. Because every body has not this gluttenous love, that would keep all to itself.

Georgetta. If my eyes are not dazzled, I see him coming.

Allen. Your eyes are good: it is he.

Georgetta. Observe how pensive he is.

Allen. He is very much vexed just now.

SCENE IV.

ARNOLPH, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH aside.

THE emperor Augustus was told by a certain Greek, as a maxim equally reasonable

and useful, that when we happened to be put in a passion by any accident, we should first of all repeat the alphabet; that in the mean while our anger may abate, and we may do nothing which we ought not to do. I have pursued this advice with regard to Agnes, and I have brought her on purpose hither, under pretence of taking a walk, in order that the suspicions of my disordered mind may artfully bring this discourse about so as to dive into her heart, and clear up the matter gently.

SCENE V.

ARNOLPH, AGNES, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH.

COME, Agnes, [To Allen and Georgetta.] Get ye in.

SCENE VI.

ARNOLPH, AGNES.

ARNOLPH.

IT is fine walking.

Agnes. Very fine.

Arnolph. A delightful day!

Agnes. Indeed it is.

Arnolph. What news have ye?

Agnes. The little cat is dead.

Arnolph. That is a great pity; but we are all mortal, and every one for himself. Had you any rain when I was in the country?

Agnes. No.

Arnolph. Were you not tired?

Agnes. I never am tired.

Arnolph. But what have you employed yourſelf with theſe nine or ten days?

Agnes. I have made ſix ſhirts, I think, and likewiſe ſix caps.

Arnolph having muſed a while.] This is a ſtrange world we live in, my dear Agnes. Obſerve how ſcandalous people are! I have been told by ſome of the neighbours, that when I was from home, you ſuffered a young man to come to my houſe, to ſee and talk with you. But I gave no credit to theſe ſlandering tongues, and would have laid a wager it was falſe—

Agnes. Lack-a-day, do not lay, you will certainly loſe.

Arnolph. What! was there really a man—

Agnes. It was really ſo. He ſcarce ſtirred out of our houſe, I will ſwear.

Arnolph aſide.] That ſhe is not in jeſt, this ſincere declaration plainly ſhews. [Aloud.] But, methinks, Agnes, if I remember right, I forbad your ſeeing any body.

Agnes. Yes: but although I ſaw him, you are ignorant of the reaſon of it. Had you been in my place, you would certainly have done the ſame.

Arnolph. That may be; but, in ſhort, tell me how this matter was.

Agnes. It is very amazing, and I dare ſay you will hardly believe it. As I was working in the balcony one fine day, I ſaw a well-made young man paſs along under the tree juſt by, who obſerving that I looked at him, immediately bowed to me very reſpectfully: I, in civility, not to be behind hand with him, returned him a courtſy. He ſoon bowed to me again, I took care to make him

another curtsy: and he bowing to me a third time, I also answered with a third curtsy. He walked to and fro, making me every time the handsomest bow imaginable, and I, who looked at him earnestly all the while, made him as many curtsies: so that if night had not come on, I should still have continued in that manner, being unwilling to give over, or to lie under the dissatisfaction of having him imagine, that I was not so complaisant as he.

Arnolph. Very well.

Agnes. The next day, as I was standing at the door, there came an old woman up to me, who thus spoke: May heaven long preserve thee in all thy beauty, my child, and pour forth its blessings upon thee! Because it has made thee so lovely, thou art not therefore to misemploy its gifts; know therefore, that thou hast wounded an heart, which now is obliged to complain of it.

Arnolph aside.] Ah! agent of the devil! damned cursed jade!

Agnes. I! have I wounded any body? replied I, very much surprized. Wounded! Ay, thou hast wounded him indeed, cries she; and it is the gentleman thou saweſt from the balcony yesterday. Alas! says I, how could I possibly do it? Did I throw any thing down upon him carelessly? No, replies she, thine eyes have given the fatal stroke, and all his hurt proceeds from their glances. Alas! says I, you surprize me much; can my eyes hurt any body? Ay, daughter, cries she, thine eyes have a deadly poison in them which thou dost not know of. In a word, the poor wretch is languishing away, and if so be, continues the charitable old woman, thy cruelty refuses him assistance, he will

be a dead man in two days time. Bleſs me! I ſhould be very ſorry for it, ſays I; but what aſſiſtance does he require of me! my child, cries ſhe, he only requeſts the happineſs of ſeeing thee, and talking to thee: thine eyes alone are able to prevent his ruin, and remedy the miſchief they have produced. Good lack! ſays I, with all my heart, and ſince it is ſo, he may come and ſee me as often as he chuſes.

Arnolph aſide.] O curſed ſorcereſs! may hell reward thy charitable wiles!

Agnes. He therefore came, ſaw me, and was cured. Do not you yourſelf think now, that I acted but reaſonably in doing ſo? and after all, could I have the conſcience to let him die for want of help? I who am ſo full of pity for thoſe that ſuffer, that I cannot forbear crying when a chicken dies?

Arnolph aſide ſoftly.] All this is only the effect of an innocent mind; and I muſt blame my own indiſcreet abſence for it, which left this perfect goodneſs expoſed to the deſigns of artful ſeducers, without any adviſer. I fear the raſcal, by his impudent pretences, has carried the matter ſomewhat beyond a jeſt.

Agnes. What is the matter? methinks you are a little out of humour. Is it that I did amiſs in what I told you?

Arnolph. No. But tell me what followed upon this interview, and in what manner the young man behaved in his viſits.

Agnes. Lack-a-day! did you but know how he was tranſported, how ſoon his illneſs left him when he ſaw me, the preſent he has made me of a fine caſket, and the money our Allen and Georget-

ta have had of him, you would certainly be in love with him, and say as we do.

Arnolph. Well, but when you was alone with him, what did he do?

Agnes. He said he loved me with an unequalled passion, and told me in the finest language in the world, things that nothing ever can come up to; the agreeableness whereof delighted me every time I heard him speak, and raised within me a certain inexpressible emotion, with which I was vastly delighted.

Arnolph aside.] O tormenting enquiry into a fatal secret, where the enquirer only suffers all the pain! [Aloud.] Besides all this talk, all these pretty ways, did not he kiss you too?

Agnes. Yes he did, most lovingly! he took my hands and arms, and was never weary of kissing them.

Arnolph. Did he take nothing else from you, Agnes? [Seeing her at a loss.] Hah!

Agnes. Why, he did—

Arnolph. What?

Agnes. Take—

Arnolph. How!

Agnes. The—

Arnolph. What do you mean?

Agnes. I dare not tell you; for perhaps you will be angry with me.

Arnolph. No, I will not.

Agnes. Yes but you will.

Arnolph. Indeed I will not.

Agnes. Swear faith then.

Arnolph. Well, faith.

Agnes. He took—You will be in a passion.

Arnolph. No.

Agnes. Yes.

Arnolph. No, no, no, no: What the deuce do you mean? What did he take from you?

Agnes. He——

Arnolph aſide.] I ſuffer damnation.

Agnes. Well then, to tell you the truth, he took away the ribbon you gave me, but I could not help it.

Arnolph recovering himſelf.] No matter for the ribbon. But I want to know whether he did nothing but kiſs your hands.

Agnes. Why! do people do other things?

Arnolph. No, no. But did not he deſire of you ſome other remedy to cure the diſorder he ſaid had ſeized him?

Agnes. He did not, but if he had, I ſhould have given any thing to do him good.

Arnolph aſide.] Heaven's goodneſs be praiſed, I am come cheaply off. If I fall into the like miſtake again, I will conſent to be ill uſed. [Aloud.] Peace, it is an effect of your innocence, Agnes: I will ſay no more of it: What is done is done. I am ſenſible that by flattering you, the ſpark only wants to impoſe upon you, and afterwards to laugh at you.

Agnes. Oh, no, he told me ſo above twenty times.

Arnolph. You ought not to believe him. It is committing a great ſin to accept of caſkets, and hearken to thoſe powdered beaux, to ſuffer them, in a languiſhing tone, to kiſs your hands and charm your heart in this manner.

Agnes. Do you call it a ſin? For what reaſon, pray?

Arnolph. For what reaſon? Why the reaſon is,

becauſe it is declared that heaven is offended at ſuch doings.

Agnes. Offended! But why ſhould it be offended? Alas! it is ſo ſweet, ſo pleaſant! I admire at the delight one finds in it, and was ignorant of theſe things before.

Arnolph. Ay, there is a great deal of pleaſure in all theſe tenderneſſes, theſe complaiſant diſcourſes, theſe fond embraces; but they ſhould be taſted in an honeſt manner, and the ſin ſhould be taken away by marrying.

Agnes. After one is married is it not a ſin?

Arnolph. No.

Agnes. Then, pray, marry me immediately.

Arnolph. If you deſire it, I deſire it too, and came back on purpoſe to marry you.

Agnes. Did you really?

Arnolph. Yes.

Agnes. How glad you will make me!

Arnolph. Ay, I do not queſtion but matrimony will pleaſe you.

Agnes. Will you have us two——

Arnolph. Nothing more certain.

Agnes. If it be ſo, I ſhall embrace you.

Arnolph. And I ſhall do the ſame by you.

Agnes. For my part, I do not underſtand when people are in jeſt. Do you ſpeak ſeriouſly?

Arnolph. Ay, you ſhall ſee I do.

Agnes. We ſhall be married then?

Arnolph. Yes.

Agnes. But when?

Arnolph. This very evening.

Agnes, laughing.] This very evening?

Arnolph. This very evening. Are you glad at it?

Agnes. Yes.

Arnolph. It is my desire to see you happy.

Agnes. I am very much obliged to you: what satisfaction shall I enjoy with him!

Arnolph. With whom?

Agnes. With—him there.

Arnolph. Him there — I do not talk of him there; you are a little forward, methinks, to choose an husband. In a word, it is another body I have got ready for you; and as for that gentleman there, I intend, by your favour, (even though the malady he amuses you with should kill him) that henceforward you shall break off all acquaintance with him: that when he comes to the house, your compliment shall be civilly to shut the door upon him, and if he knocks, throw a stone at him out of the window, and oblige him in good earnest never to come there again. Do you understand me, Agnes? I will lie concealed in a corner, and observe how you behave.

Agnes. Alack! he is so genteel, it is—

Arnolph. Heh! what a speech!

Agnes. I shall not have the heart----

Arnolph. No more disputing. Go up stairs.

Agnes. Will you really----

Arnolph. Hold your tongue; I am master, therefore you shall obey.

ACT III. SCENE I.

ARNOLPH, AGNES, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH.

BY following my directions, you have confounded the handsome seducer; in short, every thing has succeeded to my wishes, and I am vastly pleased. This it is to have a discreet adviser: your innocence, Agnes, had been insnared; and see what a condition you would have been in, before you were aware of it. You were running directly on in the high road to hell and destruction, had not I set you right. The ways of these sparks are but too well known; they have fine stockings, ribbons and feathers in abundance, large wigs, good teeth, and a smooth tongue; but I assure you, there is a cloven foot underneath, and they are devils in reality, whose voracious appetite endeavours to make a prey of female honour. However, this time, thanks to the care that has been taken, you are escaped with your virtue. The air wherewith I saw you throw that stone at him, which has rendered all his designs hopeless, makes me still more resolved not to delay the marriage, for which I told you to prepare yourself. But it is proper, first of all, to have a little talk with you, that may be to your advantage. [to Georgetta and Allen.] Bring out a chair hither. If you ever——

Georgetta. We will remember all your instruc

tions perfectly: The other gentleman there impoſed upon us: But----

Allen. May I die, if ever he get in again. Beſides, he is a blockhead, he gave us two crown pieces the other day that were not weight.

Arnolph. Get what I ordered for ſupper, and as for our contract which I ſpoke of, let one of you fetch the Notary hither, that lives at the corner of the market-place.

SCENE II.

ARNOLPH, AGNES.

ARNOLPH ſitting.

LAY aſide your work, Agnes, and pay attention to what I am going to ſay to you: hold up your head, and look at me whilſt I am ſpeaking, and be ſure remember every thing I ſay to you. I intend to marry you, Agnes, and you ought an hundred times a-day to bleſs your happy fate, to remind yourſelf of the pitiful condition you were in, and at the ſame time to admire my goodneſs, which raiſes you from the mean ſtation of a poor country-wench to the honourable rank of a citizen's wife; to enjoy both the bed and the embraces of a man who has ſhunned all ſuch engagements, and whoſe heart has refuſed the honour it will do you, to twenty people very capable of pleaſing. You ought, I ſay, continually to remind yourſelf how inſignificant you would be without this glorious alliance, to the intent that conſideration may the better teach you to deſerve the ſtation I ſhall place you in, and make you always know yourſelf, ſo that I may never repent of what I do.

Matrimony, Agnes, is not a trifling thing; severe duties are required of a wife; and I do not design to exalt you to that condition, for you to be a Libertine and to take your pleasure. Your sex is merely dependant in that state, the whole power is on the husband's side; though they are two parts of the same body, yet those two parts are far from being equal; one is the superior part, and the other the subordinate; the one is in all cases subject to the other that governs: and that obedience which the well-disciplined soldier shews to his general, the servant to his master, a child to his father, or the lowest monk to his superior, comes even very short of the tractableness, the submission, the humility, and the profound veneration which a wife should have for her husband, her chief, her lord and master. When he looks seriously upon her she should turn her eyes immediately upon the ground, and never presume to look him in the face, till he favours her with a gracious glance. Our wives, in this age, are ignorant of this, but be not you corrupted by the example of other people. Beware of imitating those foolish jilts, whose pranks are talked of all the city over; and do not let the devil tempt you, that is to say, hearken to no young coxcomb. Consider, Agnes, that by making you part of myself, I give you up my honour, which honour is tender, and easily offended; that there is no trifling on such an occasion as this, and that in hell there are boiling cauldrons wherein wives that live wickedly are plunged for ever and ever. These are not foolish stories which I am telling you, and these lessons should be imprinted in your heart. If you practise them sincerely, and avoid being a coquette, your soul will be always as white and

ſpotleſs as the lily, but if you forfeit your honour, it will become as black as a coal; you will appear as a terrible monſter to every body, and in time you will be the devil's property, and boil in hell to all eternity, from which I heartily pray you may be preſerved. Make a curtſy. As a probationer in a convent muſt know her duty by heart, ſo ſhe that marries ſhould do the very ſame: and I have a writing of great importance in my pocket, which will teach you the duty of a wife. Some good body has wrote it, who is now unknown, and I would have you ſtudy it conſtantly. [He gets up.] Hold: Let's ſee if you can read and underſtand it. [Agnes reads.

MAXIMS of WEDLOCK, or the duties of a married woman; together with her daily exerciſe.

I. MAXIM.

"THE woman who intends to be married "ought to remember, that the man who "takes her, takes her only for himſelf, notwith- "ſtanding the vaſt numbers of admirers which o- "ther women have in theſe our days.

Arnolph. I ſhall explain to you what that means; but for the preſent let us only read.

[Agnes goes on.

II. MAXIM.

"She ought to conſult her huſband about her "dreſs; it being for him alone ſhe ſhould take care "of her beauty, and be regardleſs whether other "people think her handſome or not.

III. MAXIM.

" She muſt lay aſide the practice of ogling, and " muſt uſe no paints, pomatums, beauty-waſhes, " nor the numberleſs ingredients that are made " uſe of to ſet off the complexion. Theſe are " always mortal poiſons to honour, and the pains " beſtowed to appear beautiful are ſeldom for " the huſband's ſake.

IV. MAXIM.

" When ſhe goes abroad, ſhe ought, as honour " requires, to prevent the wounds her eyes might " give, by concealing them under her hood: for " ſhe ſhould ſtudy to pleaſe her huſband, and no " one elſe.

V. MAXIM.

" Decency prohibits her from receiving any " friends whatever, except ſuch as come to ſeeher " huſband: thoſe people of gallantry that have no " buſineſs but with the wife, are very diſagreea- " ble to the huſband.

VI. MAXIM.

" She muſt not accept any preſents from men, " for they always expect ſome favour in return.

VII. MAXIM.

" Amongſt her moveables ſhe muſt have neither " ſcrutoir, ink, paper, nor pens. The huſband, ac-

" cording to good cuſtom, ſhould write all that is " written in his family.

VIII. MAXIM.

" She ſhould not go to thoſe diſorderly ſocieties " called aſſemblies, which tend to corrupt wo- " men's mind; for at theſe places they invent the " deepeſt plots againſt their huſbands.

IX. MAXIM.

" If a woman intends to preſerve her honour, " ſhe muſt ſhun gaming as a terrible thing; for " play is very bewitching, and often drives a wo- " man to the laſt ſtake.

X. MAXIM.

" She muſt never go to public walks, nor ac- " cept of treats in the country, for it is thought " the huſband generally is at the expence of ſuch " jaunts."

Arnolph. You may read the reſt of it when a-lone, and by-and-by I will explain theſe matters to you, as they ſhould be, line by line. I have a little affair come into my head, it is only to ſpeak a word, and I ſhall not tarry long. Go in, and take a ſpecial care of that book. If the Notary comes, tell him to wait till I come.

SCENE III.

ARNOLPH alone.

THIS girl is so pliant in my hands, that I can turn her any way, therefore I cannot do better than make her my wife. I very narrowly escaped being choused in my absence through her over innocence; but to say the truth, one's wife's failings had much better be from that cause; for such sort of mistakes are easily amended. Simple people pay great attention to their advisers, and if they chance to be deceived, a word or two will put them right again. But it is quite otherwise with a witty wife; our fate depends on her judgment only; nothing can divert her from pursuing what she is once set upon, and all our precepts, in this case, prove abortive. Her wit enables her to ridicule our maxims, to make virtues of her faults, and find out ways of deceiving the most dexterous, in order to bring about her wicked designs. We labour in vain to turn aside the blow; a witty woman is a plague in intrigue, and after her caprice has silently passed sentence on our honour, it must be submitted to. A great many honest people are able to declare as much. But my blunderbuss shall find no cause to laugh; he has met with what he deserves for tattling. This is the common fault of our countrymen, in the possession of good fortune they are never easy, while it is a secret, and this senseless vanity is so valuable to them, that they would rather lose their happiness than not talk of it. Sure the devil must be very strong in women when they choose such rattle-

pates! and——But here he comes: let me be upon my guard, and discover how greatly he is mortified.

SCENE IV.

HORACE, ARNOLPH.

HORACE.

I Have just been at your house, where fate seems resolved I should never meet with you; but I will go so often, that some moment at last shall--

Arnolph. Pray use not these silly compliments, than which nothing is more tiresome to me, and could I prevail, all manner of ceremony should be wholly laid aside. It is a wretched custom, wherein most people waste two parts in three of their time. Let us leave it off then without any more ado. [Puts on his hat.] Well, as to your love intrigue, Mr. Horace, may I be informed how you go on in it? I was taken off before by some business that came into my head, but I have been considering of it since: I admire the quick progress you have made at the beginning, and am solicitous for the event.

Horace. My passion has been unfortunate, Sir, since I discovered it to you.

Arnolph. Ay! how so?

Horace. The master of my fair one is unhappily returned from the country.

Arnolph. What a misfortune!

Horace. And besides, to my very great sorrow, he knows what has passed in private between us two.

Arnolph. How the deuce could he learn this affair so soon?

Horace. I really cannot tell, but so it really is. At my usual hour, I went to the house to see her, when both the man and maid, with a voice and countenance quite altered from what they used to be, opposed my entrance, and shut the door to my face with a Get you gone, you are troublesome.

Arnolph. The door to your face!

Horace. To my face.

Arnolph. That is a little hard.

Horace. I would have talked to them through the door, but to all that I could say their answer was, You shall not come in, my master has forbid it.

Arnolph. Did they not let you in then?

Horace. No. And Agnes confirmed her master's return to me from the window, by bidding me be gone in a very angry tone, and throwing a stone at me.

Arnolph. How! a stone?

Horace. A stone that was none of the least neither, by which with her own hand she received my visit.

Arnolph. The devil! These are no jokes: your affair is in no very flourishing way.

Horace. Very true, this return of his has greatly hurt me.

Arnolph. Really I am sorry for you, I protest I am.

Horace. This man breaks all my measures.

Arnolph. Ay, but that is nothing; you will find a way of setting yourself to rights again.

Horace. I must endeavour by some intelligence to baffle the strict vigilance of her jealous master.

Arnolph. You will eaſily do that, for when all is done the girl loves you.

Horace. I really believe ſhe does.

Arnolph. You will bring matters to bear.

Horace. I hope ſo.

Arnolph. That ſtone has perplexed you, but you ſhould not be aſtoniſhed at it.

Horace. That's certain, for I preſently diſcovered that my rival was there, and managed the whole affair without being ſeen in it. But what ſurprized me, and what you will wonder at, was another accident I am going to tell you of, a bold ſtroke of the lovely girl, which one would not have expected from her ſimplicity. Love, it muſt be owned, is a ſkilful maſter; he teaches us to be what we never were before, and frequently an intire alteration in our manners becomes by his leſſons only a moment's work. He breaks through the obſtacles of nature in us, and his ſudden effects have the appearance of miracles. A coward is by him in an inſtant rendered courageous, a miſer liberal, and a churl obliging; he inſpires the greateſt blockhead with wiſdom, and makes him capable of doing every thing. Agnes is a ſurprizing inſtance of this, for ſnapping me up in theſe very words, Get you gone, I am reſolved never to ſee you more. I know all you have to ſay, and there is my anſwer. This ſtone, or this pebble, at which you would wonder, fell down with a letter at my feet; and what I admire is to find this letter adapted exactly to the meaning of her words, and the ſtone ſhe threw. Are not you ſurprized at ſuch an action as this? Does not love know the art of quickening the underſtanding? And can it be denied that his powerful flames have won-

derful effects upon the mind? What do ye say to all this? What think ye of the letter? Heh! do not you admire this crafty contrivance? Is not it comical to observe what a part my jealous rival has been acting with all this foolery? Are not—

Arnolph. Ay, very comical.

Horace. Why, I think, it does not make you laugh. [Arnolph forces a laugh.] This military man, who fortifies himself in his own house against my passion, and seems provided with stones, as tho' I meant to enter by storm, who in a whimsical fright encourages all his servants to drive me away, is imposed upon before his face, even by his own instrument, by her whom he would keep in the utmost ignorance. I confess, for my part, though his return has thrown my affair under a very great difficulty, I think it is so very droll that I cannot forbear laughing whenever it comes into my head, and methinks you do not laugh at it enough.

Arnolph with a forced laugh.] I beg your pardon, I laugh at it as much as I am able.

Horace. But I must shew you her letter as a friend, in which she has writ down all that her heart felt, in terms so affecting, so perfectly full of goodness, of innocent tenderness and sincerity! in a word, in the verymanner that pure nature expresses the first wound love gives.

Arnolph aside.] This is the consequence of your writing, you gypsey: it was contrary to my intention that you was taught it.

Horace reads.] "I have a mind to write to you, "but I know not where I shall begin. I have "some thoughts which I am desirous you should "be acquainted with; but I am at a loss how tell "them you, and distrust my want of words. As

" I begin to underſtand that I have always been " kept in ignorance, I am afraid of writing ſome- " thing that would be wrong, or ſaying more than " I ſhould do. I do not know what you have " done to me, but I find that I am ready to die " with vexation for what I am forced to do againſt " you, that it would give me all the uneaſineſs in " the world to loſe you, and that I ſhould be great- " ly delighted to be yours. There is harm, per- " haps, in ſaying ſo, but really I cannot forbear, " though I wiſh it could have been brought about, " and no harm had been in it. I am informed, " that all young men are falſe, that what they ſay " muſt not be minded, and that every thing you " tell me is only to deceive me: But I aſſure you, " I cannot yet imagine that of you, and I am ſo " affected by your words, that I do not know how " to believe they are lies. Tell me generouſly " if they be; for as I am devoid of any ill de- " ſign, you would do the greateſt injury in the " world ſhould you deceive me, and I believe the " vexation of it would kill me.

Arnolph aſide.] Um, Bitch!

Horace. What do ye ſay?

Arnolph. I? Nothing I only coughed.

Horace. Did you ever ſee more tenderneſs of expreſſion? notwithſtanding all the curſed endea- vours of unreaſonable power, is it poſſible to find a better natural capacity? and is not it certainly a mortal ſin villainouſly to ſpoil ſuch an admirable ge- nius? to be deſirous of obſcuring the brightneſs of ſuch a mind in ignorance and ſtupidity? But love has begun to pull off the maſk; and if by the favour of ſome lucky ſtar I can be able to deal with

this mere animal, this blockhead, this ſcoundrel, this brute----

Arnolph. Good bye to ye.

Horace. Why in ſuch a hurry?

Arnolph. I have juſt thought of an important affair, which----

Horace. Can you not tell me of any body (as you live in the neighbourhood) that could get admittance into this houſe? I make free with you, and it is not unuſual for friends to ſerve one another on ſuch occaſions. At preſent I have no body in it but people to watch me; the man and maid both, as I found juſt now, in ſpight of all that I could do, would not be ſo civil as to hear me. I had a certain old woman in my intereſt for ſome time, of a genius, to ſay the truth, more than human. She was very ſerviceable to me at the beginning; but four days ago the poor woman died. Cannot you put me in ſome way?

Arnolph. No, really; you will find out ſome without me.

Horace. Farewel then. You ſee what confidence I put in you.

SCENE V.

ARNOLPH alone.

WHAT a reſtraint I am obliged to put upon myſelf before him! What! a ſimpleton have ſo much ready wit! ſuch the huſſy has pretended to be in my ſight. How the deuce has her ſoul ſucked in this ſubtility? After all, that fatal letter is the death of me. I find the villain has corrupted her mind, and has fixed himſelf there

in my place: This gives me despair and mortal pain. I suffer doubly by being robbed of her heart, for thereby love is injured as well as honour. It distracts me to see my prudent measures defeated, and my place usurped. I am sensible that to punish her guilty passion, I need only leave her to her evil destiny, and that she herself would revenge me upon herself; but to be deprived of the thing one loves is terrible. Heavens! after making use of so much philosophy in my choice, why must I be so mightily bewitched by her charms? She is destitute of parents, friends, and money; she abuses my care, my favours, my tenderness; and yet I love her, even after this base affair, so much that I am unable to throw off this fondness. Fool! hast thou no shame? Oh I burst! I am mad, and I could tear myself in pieces. I will stop in a little, but only to see how she looks after so enormous a crime. Heaven grant that my brows may be free from dishonour! but if it is decreed that I must suffer it, bestow upon me at least that fortitude which some people are endowed with to bear such accidents!

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ARNOLPH.

WHerever I go my mind distracts me, it is greatly perplexed how to manage things both within doors and without, so as to frustrate the designs of this young fop. With what effrontery did the traitress bear the sight of me! what she has done does not in the least concern her; and

though she has brought me within an inch of the grave, one would swear, to look at her, that she had not the least hand in it. The more she appeared composed when I saw her, the more was I vexed, and those boiling transports which inflamed my heart, seemed only to redouble my ardent passion. I was incensed against her, and yet I never saw her appear so beautiful; her eyes, methought, never were before so piercing, never did they before inspire me with such violent desires: and I perceive it would kill me should my evil destiny bring this disgrace upon me. What? Have I brought her up so tenderly, and with so much care? Have I taken her to me from her infancy? Have I indulged the fondest hopes? Must I build upon her growing charms? And during thirteen years have I fondled her to be my own, as I imagined, for an hair-brained youth whom she is in love with to come and run away with her before my face, and that even when she is half married to me? No, by heavens, my foolish young friend; by heavens, no: you must be a cunning fellow to overturn my project; or else by my faith, I shall render all your hopes abortive, and you will find no cause to laugh at me.

SCENE II.

A NOTARY, ARNOLPH.

NOTARY.

O There he is! Good-morrow to ye: I am ready to draw up the contract as you desire.

Arnolph not perceiving or hearing him.] In what manner must it be done?

Notary. It muſt be done in the uſual form.

Arnolph not perceiving him.] I will uſe all poſſible precaution.

Notary. I will do nothing contrary to your intereſt.

Arnolph not perceiving him.] I muſt guard againſt any ſurprize.

Notary. It is enough that your affairs are put into my hands. You muſt by no means ſign the contract before you receive the portion, for fear of being cheated.

Arnolph not perceiving him.] I am afraid, ſhould I make the leaſt diſcovery, it would become a public town-talk.

Notary. But it is very eaſy to prevent a diſcovery; your contract may be tranſacted privately.

Arnolph not perceiving him.] But how ſhall I ſettle the point with her?

Notary. The jointure ſhould be in proportion to the fortune ſhe brings you.

Arnolph not perceiving him.] I love her, and that love is the greateſt difficulty I labour under.

Notary. In that caſe the wife may have ſo much the more.

Arnolph not perceiving him.] How to behave to her on ſuch an occaſion?

Notary. The law ſays, the huſband that is to be ſhall ſettle upon the wife that is to be the third part of her portion; but the law ſignifies nothing at all, you may do a great deal more than that if you have a mind to it.

Arnolph not perceiving him. If-----

[Seeing the Notary.

Notary. As for the preſents to be made, let them agree together. I ſay the huſband that is to

be may give the wife that is to be what jointure he chuſes.

Arnolph. Heh!

Notary. He may give her ſo much and more, if he loves her greatly, and is deſirous to oblige her, and that by way of jointure or ſettlement as they call it, to be left and go away intirely to the right heirs of the ſaid wife that is to be, upon her deceaſe; or elſe according to the ſtatute, as people have a mind; or as a gift, by a deed in form, which may be made either ſingle or mutual. Wherefore do you ſhrug? Do not I talk very learnedly? Do you think that I do not underſtand the manner of a contract? Who is it can teach me? No body, I preſume. Do not I know that when they are married they have in law an equal right to all moveables, monies, immoveables and acquiſitions, unleſs they give it up by an act of renunciation? Do not I know that a third part of the portion of the wife that is to be, becomes in common, for——

Arnolph. I do not in the leaſt doubt but that you know all this; but no body is talking to you about it.

Notary. Why, do you ſeem to take me for a fool, by ſhrugging up your ſhoulders, and making faces at me?

Arnolph. Pox take the fellow with his puppy's face. Adieu, that is the way to make you hold your peace.

Notary. Was not I fetched hither to draw up a contract?

Arnolph. Yes, I ſent for you; but the affair is put off, and I will ſend for you again when the

time is fixed. What a noiſe the fellow makes!

Notary alone.] I dare ſay the man is mad.

SCENE III.

NOTARY, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

NOTARY.

DID you come to fetch me to your maſter?

Allen. Yes.

Notary. I do not know what you may take him for, but go and tell him from me, that he is a mad fool.

Georgetta. We ſhall not fail to do it.

SCENE IV.

ARNOLPH, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ALLEN.

SIR,———

Arnolph. Come hither, you are my truſty, my good, my real friends, and I have ſome news for you.

Allen. The Notary———

Arnolph. No matter, ſome other time for that. A wicked deſign is contrived againſt my honour; and what a diſgrace would it be for you, children, to have your maſter robbed of his honour? After that you would not dare to appear in any place, for whoever ſees you would point at you. Therefore, ſince the affair concerns you as much as me, you muſt take ſuch care, for your part, that this gallant may not———

Georgetta. You have taught us our leſſon already.

Arnolph. But beware of paying the leaſt attention to his ſly ſpeeches.

Allen. O! to be ſure.———

Georgetta. We know how to deny him.

Arnolph. Suppoſe he ſhould come now in a coaxing manner; Allen, my dear heart, cheer up my drooping ſpirits by a little of your aſſiſtance.

Allen. You are a blockhead.

Arnolph. Right. [To Georgetta.] Georgetta, my pretty-face, you ſeem ſo ſweet-tempered, and ſo good a body.

Georgetta. You are an oaf.

Arnolph. Right. [To Allen.] Do you think there is the leaſt harm in an honeſt and virtuous deſign?

Allen. You are a villain.

Arnolph. Very well. [To Georgetta.] I ſhall certainly die, if you take no pity on the pains I ſuffer.

Georgetta. You are a fool, an impudent raſcal.

Arnolph. Mighty good. [To Allen.] I am not a perſon that deſires ſomething for nothing; I know how to remember ſervices that are done me: However, Allen, there is ſomewhat to make you drink before-hand; and there is to buy you ſome ribbons, Georgetta. [Both hold out their hands and take the money.] This is only an earneſt of my kindneſs; and all the favour I requeſt of you is only to let me ſee your handſome miſtreſs.

Georgetta puſhing him.] None of your tricks upon us.

Arnolph. That is good.

Allen puſhing him.] Begone.

Arnolph. Right.

Georgetta puſhing him.] Immediately.

Arnolph. Very well. Hold, enough.

Georgetta. Do not I do right?

Allen. Is this the way you would have us behave to him?

Arnolph. Yes, you do extremely well, except as to the money, which you must not take.

Georgetta. We did not think of that.

Allen. Would you have us begin again just now?

Arnolph. No; it is enough, go in both of you.

Allen. You need only speak.

Arnolph. No, I tell you, go in when I desire you. You may keep the money; go, I will come to you again; look circumspectly to every thing, and second my endeavours.

SCENE V.

ARNOLPH alone.

THIS spark shall be mighty cunning indeed, if he can now get either letter or message conveyed to her. I will get the cobler who lives at the corner of our street to be a spy for me. I intend never to let her out of doors, and will banish all milliners, tire-women, and glove-makers, who make it their constant custom to help on love-intrigues. I who understand matters, and have seen the world, know all the tricks of it.

SCENE VI.

HORACE, ARNOLPH,

HORACE.

I HAVE just now made a very narrow escape, and am very glad to find you here. Just after I saw you last, I unexpectedly saw Agnes all alone

in the balcony, enjoying the fresh air. After having made me a sign, she came down and let me in by the garden door. But I was hardly in her chamber, before she heard her watchful Argus upon the stairs; upon which she shut me up in a closet which luckily happined to be in the room. He came into the room immediately: I did not see him, but I heard him walk to and fro at a great rate, without uttering one syllable, but sighing grievously now and then, and sometimes giving great thumps upon the table, beating a little dog that fawned upon him, and overturning every thing that came in his way; he broke in his passion the very flower-pots with which the fair one had set out her chimney; and without doubt the trick she has played must have come to his ear. At last, after having by twenty such tricks discharged his fury on things that could not help it, he without saying what made him uneasy, left the chamber, and I my prison. We durst not venture to stay together any longer for fear of somebody, it would have been running too great a risque: But she is to admit me into her chamber to-night, when it is late; the sign for her to know me is to be three hems, and then the window will be opened, out of which Agnes is to put a ladder, whereby I will enter. This I tell to you as my only friend: Joy increases by being revealed; and should one taste the most consummate joys an hundred times over, it would not be satisfactory unless it were known by some-body. You will take part, I believe, in the success of my affairs. Farewell, I am going about some other business just now.

SCENE VII.

ARNOLPH alone.

AM I never to be at rest, but be constantly persecuted by my evil destiny? Is my vigilance and wisdom to be for ever defeated? And am I always to be the sport of this simple wench and raw-brained fop? I have been contemplating the wretched fate of married men for these twenty years and upwards, and have carefully informed myself of all the accidents whereby the most wary are distressed: I have profited by the disgraces of others, and have endeavoured to secure my brows from all affronts, and prevent their being like other foreheads, it being my intent to marry: For this noble purpose I thought I had made use of every project that could be thought of, but cruel fate seems to have decreed that no mortal should be exempted from it; after all the light and experience that I could possibly gain in these matters, after more than twenty years studying how to conduct myself cautiously through the whole affair, have I acted contrary to the practice of so many husbands, to find myself in the very same condition as they are? Ah! cruel destiny, thou hast proved false! I am still in possession of the desired object; and if her heart is stolen from me by this unlucky spark, I will prevent him however from seizing any thing else, and they shall not spend this night so agreeably as they imagine. This blunderer, by entrusting his secret with me, puts it in my power to defeat all his projects, which is however some small comfort.

SCENE VIII.

CHRISALDUS, ARNOLPH.

CHRISALDUS.

WELL, ſhall we ſup before we walk?

Arnolph. No, I do not intend to take any ſupper to-night.

Chriſaldus. Pray what is the reaſon of this?

Arnolph. I have a reaſon for it.

Chriſaldus. Is not the wedding you reſolved upon to be performed?

Arnolph. You interfere too much in other people's affairs.

Chriſaldus. How ſharp you are! I ſuppoſe you have been croſſed in your love-affair.

Arnolph. Let what will befal me, I ſhall at leaſt have the advantage of being unlike certain people, who peaceably ſuffer galants to make their viſits.

Chriſaldus. It is very odd, that you ſhould always take fright upon this affair, that you ſhould place your ſovereign happineſs in this, and imagine no other kind of honour in the world: To be a miſer, a villain, a bully, and coward, is nothing in your opinion, compared with this blot; and in whatſoever manner a man may have lived, he is a man of honour if he is not a cuckold. To ſpeak ſeriouſly, what makes you think that all our glory is dependent on ſuch an accident? And that a virtuous mind has any thing to reproach itſelf for the injuſtice of a vicious one which it could not help? Why will you, I ſay, imagine that in marrying one deſerves either praiſe or blame for the

choice one makes, and form a moſt horrible monſter of the affront that is done one by a wife's falſhood? Be perſuaded that a man of honour need not be ſo frighted at cuckoldom; that none being ſecure from the ſtrokes of fortune, this accident ſhould be thought in itſelf indifferent; and in a word, that all the harm of it, let the world pretend what it will, lies only in the manner of our bearing it. To behave well under theſe difficulties, one muſt, as well as in all others, avoid extremes: not be like thoſe over-good natured people, who, proud of ſuch affairs, are continually bringing galants to viſit their wives, and telling their good qualifications to every one; who appear exactly of their humour, come to all their treats and meetings, make every one wonder at their having the aſſurance to ſhew their faces there. This way of acting is certainly highly blameable, but the other extreme is not leſs ſo. As I do not approve of ſuch as are friends to their wives' galants, I am no more for thoſe violent people whoſe indiſcreet reſentment, full of rage and fury, draws the eyes of every one upon them by its noiſe, and who, by the buſtle they make, appear unwilling that any body ſhould be ignorant what they are. There is a medium between theſe two extremes, where a wiſe man ſtops upon ſuch an occaſion: when a body knows how to take it, there is no cauſe to be aſhamed for the worſt a wife can do. In a word, people may ſay of it what they pleaſe, but it may be eaſily made to appear not ſo frightful, and, as I told you before, all the dexterity lies in knowing how to turn the fair ſide outwards.

Arnolph. The whole fraternity ought to return you thanks for this excellent ſpeech, and any be-

dy that hears you ſpeak muſt rejoice to find himſelf enrolled amongſt the number.

Chriſaldus. I do not ſay that, for it is what I blame: but as a wife is the gift of fortune, one ſhould do, I ſay, as at dice, where if what you expect do not come up, you muſt make uſe of dexterity and temper to amend your luck by good conduct.

Arnolph. That is to ſay, always eat and ſleep quietly, and perſuade yourſelf it ſignifies juſt nothing.

Chriſaldus. You think to make a jeſt of it: but in my opinion there are a hundred things worſe than this accident which you dread ſo much. If I were forced to make my choice, I would rather chuſe to be one of that fraternity you ſo much deſpiſe, than to be married to one of theſe modeſt women whoſe perverſeneſs makes a quarrel out of nothing: thoſe dragons of virtue, thoſe honeſt ſhe-devils, pique themſelves continually upon their wife conduct, who, becauſe they do not do us a ſlight injury, take upon them to behave haughtily, and expect from their being true to us, that we ſhould bear every thing from them.—Let me tell you, friend Arnolph, once again, that cuckoldom is really nothing but what one makes it, that it is even deſirable on ſome accounts, and that it, as well as other things, has its pleaſures.

Arnolph. If you are of a temper to be contented under it, I have not the leaſt inclination to experience it for my part, and rather than ſubmit to ſuch a thing———

Chriſaldus. Swear not, I beſeech you, for fear of being perjured. If fate ordains it ſo, your pre-

cautions are all to no purpose; you will not be consulted about the matter.

Arnolph. Shall I be a cuckold?

Chrisaldus. You are grievously hurt: A thousand people are so, without disparagement to you, who for person, courage, wealth, and family, would be affronted to be compared with you.

Arnolph. For my part, I shall make no comparisons with them. But, in one word, this raillery is foolish, let us have done with it, if you please.

Chrisaldus. You are at present enraged, therefore I bid you adieu for the present: but remember, whatever your honour may make you imagine as to this affair, that it is being half what we were talking of, to swear you will not be so.

Arnolph. I swear it again, and will go immediately and endeavour to prevent this misfortune.

[Goes to knock at his door.

SCENE IX.

ARNOLPH, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH.

NOW is the time, my friends, that I beg you would assist me. I really believe you have a regard for me, but now you must make it appear; if you are honest and faithful you may be certain of a reward. The young spark intends to trick me this very night, and get by a ladder into Agnes's chamber, but pray keep it very secret; we three must lay a trap for him. Each of you must be ready with a good heavy club, and when he is almost at the top of the ladder, (for I will o-

pen the window at the nick of time) both of you must fall upon him in such a manner, that his back may be sure to make him remember it, and teach him never to come there again. However, do not mention me at all, nor make any appearance of my being behind. Will you have the courage to execute my resentment?

Allen. If he is only to be thrashed, Sir, depend upon us, you shall see whether I strike with a dead man's arm or not.

Georgetta. 'Tho' mine seems not so strong, in thrashing him it shall not be lazy.

Arnolph. Go you in then, and above all things, be careful of speaking about it. [alone.] This is a useful lesson for my neighbour, and there would not be so many cuckolds, if every husband was to give his wife's galant the same reception.

ACT V. SCENE I.

ARNOLPH, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH.

WHO commanded you to beat him in that manner, wretches? you have murdered him.

Allen. We followed your directions, Sir.

Arnolph. I ordered you to beat his back, but not to murder him, therefore it is in vain for you to make that excuse. Heavens! into what a condition has fortune now reduced me! what can I think of doing, to see the man dead? Get into the house, and be sure you say not a word of the innocent order

I gave you. [alone.] It will soon be light, and I will go ask advice how I shall manage this affair. Alas! what will become of me? And what will the father say, when he comes to know of this fatal misfortune?

SCENE II.

ARNOLPH, HORACE.

HORACE aside.

I MUST go ask who it is.

Arnolph thinking himself alone.] It was impossible to foresee——[being run against by Horace.] Who is there pray?

Horace. Is it you, Mr. Arnolph?

Arnolph. Yes, but who are you?——

Horace. I was going to your house to beg a favour of you. You are very soon abroad this morning.

Arnolph low aside.] Surprising! Is it an enchantment? Is it a vision?

Horace. To say the truth, I have been very much troubled, and I thank heaven's great goodness for meeting you here thus luckily. I am going to tell you how every thing has succeeded even much better than I could have expected, and that too by an accident which might have ruined all. I do not know how the assignation we had made could possibly come to be suspected; but just as I was got to the window I saw some people appear, who striking furiously at me, made my feet slip, and I tumbled to the ground: which fall, at the expence of a bruise, saved me from a hearty drubbing. These people, (amongst whom my jealous-pate, I suppose,

was one) imagined my fall to be occasioned by the force of their blows; and as my pain made me lie a considerable time motionless on the spot, they really thought I was dead; which immediately alarmed them all. I heard their noise with a profound silence; they accused one another of the violence, and complaining of their hard fate, came softly, without any light, to feel if I was dead. It being very dark, I easily assumed the appearance of a dead man. They went away very much terrified: and as I was considering how to get off, young Agnes, whom my pretended death had frighted, came to me in great concern: (For she had heard what the people said to one another, and being less observed during all this fray, she easily slipped out of the house.) But finding I was not hurt, she was greatly delighted. What shall I say more to you? At last this amiable fair one has followed the dictates of her love, and being unwilling to go home any more, has committed herself intirely to my trust. You may find a little by this harmless proceeding, how much the gross impertinence of a fool exposes her, and what danger she might have been in, had I a less sincere regard for her; but my heart burns with too pure a flame, and I would rather die than injure her. I see charms in her which are worthy of a happier fate, and nothing but death shall part us. I foresee my father's anger, but we shall find a time to appease his wrath. I yield to her tender charms, and in short, we must please ourselves in life: The favour, therefore, I would beg of you, (relying on your secrecy and sincerity) is, that I may put her into your hands, and that you will so far assist my passion, as to conceal her in your house for a day or two at least.

For, beſides that, her going off ſhould be kept an intire ſecret, to prevent any certain purſuit after her; you are ſenſible that a girl of her beauty would be ſtrangely ſuſpected in the company of a young man; and as I have diſcloſed the whole ſecret of my paſſion to you, being well aſſured of your prudence, ſo I can entruſt this valuable prize to no friend ſo ſincere as you.

Arnolph. You may be aſſured that I am wholly devoted to your ſervice.

Horace. And will you do me this kind office?

Arnolph. Very readily, I aſſure you; I am overjoyed at this opportunity of ſerving you, and thank heaven for giving it me. Never did any thing afford me more pleaſure.

Horace. How greatly am I indebted to you for your goodneſs! I was afraid you would make a difficulty of doing it; but you know the world, and your wiſdom can excuſe the heat of youth. She is at the corner of this ſtreet, with one of my ſervants.

Arnolph. But it now begins to grow light, how ſhall we manage? Perhaps I ſhall be ſeen if I take her here, and the ſervants will tattle if you ſhould come to my houſe. Therefore, to be ſafe, ſhe muſt be brought to me in ſome darker place. I will go ſtay for her in my alley, it is very convenient.

Horace. It is very right to uſe theſe precautions; for my part, I ſhall do no more than put her into your hands, and then get me home immediately without ſaying any thing.

Arnolph alone.] All the miſchief thou haſt done me, cruel fortune! is repaired by this ſingle accident.

[Throws his cloke over his face.

SCENE III.

AGNES, HORACE, ARNOLPH.

HORACE to Agnes.

I AM carrying you to a very safe lodging, therefore be not in the least uneasy; it would ruin all for you to be with me. Go in at this door, and he will conduct you.

[Arnolph takes her hand without her knowing him.

Agnes to Horace.] Wherefore do you leave me?

Horace. Dear Agnes, it must be so.

Agnes. Pray then do not stay long, but come back as soon as possible.

Horace. I will return to you immediately.

Agnes. I feel no joy but when you are present.

Horace. I too am melancholy when you are out of my sight.

Agnes. Alack! If that was true, you would not leave me now.

Horace. What! can you doubt of my excessive love?

Agnes. Nay, you do not love me so much as I love you. [Arnolph pulls her.] Oh! you pull me too hard.

Horace. Dear Agnes, that is because it is not safe for us two to be seen here; and this faithful friend who pulls you so, is prudently zealous for our service.

Agnes. But to follow a stranger, who——

Horace. Fear nothing, you cannot be in better hands.

Agnes. I ſhould think myſelf much better in Horace's; and I ſhould——[To Arnolph, who pulls her again.] Stay a little.

Horace. The day drives me away. Adieu.

Agnes. When ſhall I ſee you then?

Horace. Very ſoon, you may be certain:

Agnes. How uneaſy I ſhall be till that time comes!

Horace. My happineſs now, thank heaven, is ſecure, and I may ſleep ſafely.

SCENE IV.

ARNOLPH, AGNES.

ARNOLPH concealed under his cloke, and altering his voice.

COME along, I have prepared a lodging elſe-where for you, and you ſhall not ſtay here; I intend to put you in a place where you may be ſafe enough. [Diſcovering himſelf.] Do you know me?

Agnes knowing him.] Hah!

Arnolph. You are frightened, I think, huſſy, at ſeeing me, and are undoubtedly very much diſpleaſed at finding me here: I have very luckily interrupted the love-contrivances you have in your head. [Agnes looks if ſhe cannot ſee Horace.] Think not that your eyes can call back your ſpark to your aſſiſtance, he is gone too far for that. Ha! ha! ſo young, and yet to play theſe pranks! Your extraordinary ſeeming ignorance enquired if children were produced at the ear, though you are not ignorant how to make aſſignations by night, and ſteal away very ſilently to run after a galant. Odſbobs,

how flippant your tongue was with him! sure you must have been at some rare school: Pray who has taught you all this so suddenly? You are no longer it seems afraid of ghosts? This galant has given you courage in the night-time. Ah! baggage, to arrive at this deceit! to form such a design, regardless of all my kindness: Thou art a little serpent that I have warmed in my bosom, which when it comes to its feeling, ungratefully tries to kill him who preserved its life.

Agnes. Why do ye scold at me?

Arnolph. I am very much to blame, indeed.

Agnes. I do not know any harm in all this that I have done.

Arnolph. Is not running after a galant a scandalous action?

Agnes. It is a man that says he will take me for his wife, I followed your directions; for you told me one must marry to take away the guilt.

Arnolph. Ay, but I intended to make you my own wife, and methinks I let you know my meaning plain enough.

Agnes. Yes, but to tell you the truth, I love him better than you; matrimony with you is a troublesome uneasy thing, and you give a frightful description of it; but alack-a-day! he represents it so delightful, that it makes one have a mind to be married.

Arnolph. Ah! traitress! that is because you love him.

Agnes. Really I do love him.

Arnolph. And have you the impudence to tell me so?

Agnes. Why may not I say so, if it is true?

Arnolph. Ought you to love him, impertinence?

Agnes. Alas! can I help it? He only is the cauſe of it; I did not think of it till it was over.

Arnolph. But you ſhould have diſcarded that amorous deſire.

Agnes. How can a body diſcard what is delightful?

Arnolph. And are you ignorant that I am diſpleaſed at it?

Agnes. Not at all; What harm can it do you?

Arnolph. Very true, I have reaſon to be glad at it. You do not love me then at this rate?

Agnes. You!

Arnolph. Ay,

Agnes. Indeed I do not

Arnolph. How! no?

Agnes. Would you have me tell you a falſhood?

Arnolph. What is the reaſon that you do not love me, madam impudence?

Agnes. Lack-a-day, you ſhould not blame me! Why did not you make yourſelf beloved as he did? If I hindered you, it was without my knowledge.

Arnolph. I endeavoured it all I could, but my pains were in vain.

Agnes. Then he underſtands it better than you do, for he made me love him without the leaſt pains.

Arnolph aſide.] Obſerve how the ſlut anſwers and argues! None of your witty ladies could have ſaid more. Ah! I did not well know her, or elſe, by my faith, in theſe caſes a ſimple woman underſtands more than the wiſeſt man. [To Agnes.] Since you are ſo good at reaſoning, Mrs. Chop-Logick, is there any reaſon why I ſhould maintain you ſo long a time at my own charge for him?

Agnes. No, he will repay you every thing.

Arnolph aſide.] She hits upon certain words which give me double vexation. [To Agnes.] Is he able, gypſey, to repay me the obligations you have to me?

Agnes. I have no ſuch great ones as you think.

Arnolph. Is it nothing to take care of your education from your childhood?

Agnes. You have been at great pains about that matter truly, and have cauſed me to be bravely inſtructed in every thing. Do ye imagine I flatter myſelf ſo far as not to know in my own mind that I am intirely ignorant? I am aſhamed of it myſelf, and at this age will not paſs any longer for a fool, if I can help it.

Arnolph. You deſpiſe ignorance, and are reſolved, whatever it coſts, to learn ſomething of your galant?

Agnes. To be ſure. He has taught me what I do know, and I think myſelf more obliged to him than you.

Arnolph. I cannot tell what ſhould prevent me from revenging this ſaucy language with my fiſt. I am diſtracted at the ſight of her provoking coldneſs, and beating her would be a ſatisfaction to me.

Agnes. If that will pleaſe you, you are very welcome to do it.

Arnolph aſide.] That ſpeech and that look diſarm my rage, and produce a return of tenderneſs which effaces all her guilt. What ſtrange effects does love produce! and how weak do men make themſelves appear, for theſe gypſies! Every body knows their imperfection; they are nothing but extravagance and indiſcretion; their mind is wicked and their underſtanding weak; nothing is more

frail, nothing more unsteady, nothing more false, and yet for all that one does the greatest absurdities for their sake. [To Agnes.] Well, let us make peace: Go, thou little rogue, I forgive thee every thing, and now am fond of thee again: Learn by this how much I love thee, and seeing I am so good, love thou me in return.

Agnes. I would very willingly oblige you, if it was in my power.

Arnolph. My dear life, thou canst if thou wouldst. Do but hear that amorous sigh, behold this dying look, view my person, and lay all thoughts aside of this young coxcomb, and the love he offers thee. He must certainly have put some spell upon thee, and thou wilt be a hundred times more happy with me. Thou delightest in being fine and gay, and I protest thou shalt always be so. I shall be fondling thee continually; I shall hug thee, and kiss thee. Thou shalt do every thing thou chusest, which is saying all that can be said without coming to particulars. [Aside.] How far will my passion go? [Aloud.] Nothing really can be equal to my love. What proof of it wouldst thou have me give thee, ungrateful wench? Wouldst thou behold me weep? Wouldst thou have me beat myself? Wouldst thou have me tear off my hair? Would'st thou have me murder myself? Ay; say if thou wouldst have me do it; I am intirely ready, cruel creature, to convince thee of my love.

Agnes. Hold; I am not in the least affected at all you say; Horace with two words would have wrought upon me more than you.

Arnolph. Heh! this is too great an insult, provoking my rage too far: I will pursue my design,

you untractable brute, and pack you out of town immediately. You vex me, and reject my addreſſes, but depend upon it, if you do not behave better, I will ſend you to a convent.

SCENE V.

ARNOLPH, AGNES, ALLEN.

ALLEN.

I Know not how it is, Sir, but methought the dead corps and Agnes went away together.

Arnolph. Here ſhe is: Go confine her in my chamber. [Aſide.] He will not come there to ſeek her. Beſides, it is only for half an hour. I will go get a coach, that I may ſecure her in a more convenient place. Faſten yourſelves in well, and be ſure do not let her be out of ſight. [Alone.] It is ſome comfort to me, that I can eaſily turn her head from this love-affair, when ſhe is out of town.

SCENE VI.

HORACE, ARNOLPH,

HORACE.

WHAT woeful news have I now to tell you, dear friend! Fate is determined that I never ſhall be happy, and is going again to wreſt my beloved Agnes from me. I juſt now ſaw my father arrive, who tells me that he has made a match for me, without writing me a word about it, and is come to this place to celebrate the nuptials. You are ſenſible what a great diſap-

pointment this is to me. That Henriques of whom I spoke to you yesterday is come with my father, and it is to his daughter that they intend to marry me. I almost fainted when I first heard it, and not caring to hear any more of it, (as my father talked of coming to see you) I hasted hither before hand, very much perplexed. Do not tell him a word, I beg of you, of my engagement, which might incense him; and endeavour to dissuade him from this fresh engagement, for no one's words have greater power over him than yours.

Arnolph. I shall do all in my power.

Horace. Advise him to put it off a little, and as a friend, assist my passion in this particular.

Arnolph. I really shall use my utmost endeavours.

Horace. My hopes are all in you.

Arnolph. Very well.

Horace. I look upon you as my real father. Tell him that my age—But here he comes; hear the reasons I can furnish you with.

SCENE VII.

HENRIQUES, ORANTES, CHRISALDUS, HORACE, ARNOLPH.

Horace and Arnolph retire to a corner of the stage, and whisper.

HENRIQUES to Chrisaldus.

HAD I not been told who you were, I should have known you: I recollected your amiable sister's features, whom the sacred ties of wedlock once united to me; what pleasure should I

now have had, in bringing her to see all our friends, after our numberless calamities! but cruel heaven denies me that delight, and has robbed me of her sweet company: Let us therefore endeavour to be contented with the only fruit that remains of our loves. You are very nearly concerned in it, and to dispose of this pledge without your consent would be very wrong. The choice of Orontes's son is in itself honourable, but you must be pleased in the choice as well as me.

Chrisaldus. It is having a bad opinion of my judgment, to doubt my approbation of so reasonable a choice.

Arnolph aside to Horace.] Ay, I will serve you in the best manner.

Horace aside to Arnolph.] But beware of one thing—

Arnolph to Horace.] Be under no concern.

[Arnolph quits Horace to embrace Orontes.

Orontes to Arnolph.] O! how full of tenderness is this embrace!

Arnolph. What pleasure it gives me to see you!

Orontes. I am come hither——

Arnolph. I already know it.

Orontes. Have you been informed already?

Arnolph. Yes.

Orontes. So much the better.

Arnolph. Your son hates this match, and his heart being pre-engaged looks upon it as a misfortune: He even desired me to dissuade you from it; and for my part, all the advice I can give you is to exert the authority of a father, and not let the marriage be deferred. Young people should be governed with an high hand, they are frequently spoiled by being indulgent to them.

Horace aſide.] Oh! Traitor!

Chriſaldus. If it is againſt his inclination, I think we ſhould not force him. My brother, I believe, will be of the ſame way of thinking.

Arnolph. What! will he ſuffer his ſon to govern him? Would you have a father be ſo weak as not to know how to make youth obey him? To ſee him receiving laws at this time of life from one who ought to receive them from him, would be mighty pretty. No, no, he is my intimate friend, and his honour is mine, his promiſe is given, and he muſt perform it. Let him now ſhew his reſolution, and force his ſon's affections.

Orontes. You ſay right, and to what regards this match, I will be anſwerable for my ſon's obedience.

Chriſaldus to Arnolph] You ſurprize me greatly by being ſo eager for this match, and I cannot conceive why———

Arnolph. I know what I know, and ſpeak what I ought to ſpeak.

Orontes. Ay, ay, Mr. Arnolph, he is—

Chriſaldus. He is diſpleaſed at that name, it is Mr. de la Souche, as you have been told already.

Arnolph. It does not ſignify.

Horace aſide.] What is this I hear?

Arnolph turning towards Horace.] Ay, there lies the ſecret, and you may judge what I ought to do.

Horace aſide.] Into what uneaſineſs——

SCENE VIII.

HENRIQUES, ORONTES, CHRISALDUS, HORACE, ARNOLPH, GEORGETTA.

GEORGETTA.

AGNES says she will run all hazards to make her escape, Sir, and will perhaps throw herself out at the window, if you do not come and help us to keep her.

Arnolph. Bring her to me, for I intend to take her away from hence immediately. [To Horace.] Do not you be troubled at it, continual good fortune would make a man proud, and every dog has his day, as the proverb says.

Horace. Never was any body so unfortunate as I am!

Arnolph to Orontes.] Hasten the day of the ceremony? I beg it may be so, and invite myself to it already.

Orontes. That is my real intention.

SCENE IX.

AGNES, ORONTES, HENRIQUES, ARNOLPH, HORACE, CHRISALDUS, ALLEN, GEORGETTA.

ARNOLPH to Agnes.

COME here, my pretty girl, come here, you who will have your own way, and cannot be managed; here is your spark, you may make him a submissive courtsy, by way of amends. [To Horace.] Farewel, the affair has not turned out

according to our wiſhes, but lovers are not all lucky.

Agnes. Horace, do you allow me to be forced away in this manner?

Horace. My grief is ſo great, I am inſenſible.

Arnolph. Come along, with your chit-chat, come along.

Agnes. I will ſtay here.

Orontes. Explain this myſtery to us; we ſtare one at another without being able to underſtand it.

Arnolph. I will tell you at a more convenient time. Your ſervant.

Orontes. Where do you intend to go to? You do not inform us of what we want to know.

Arnolph. I have adviſed you to conclude the match in ſpite of his repining.

Orontes. But in order to conclude it (if you have been told all) did they not tell you that the perſon who we mean is in your houſe juſt now, and is the daughter of the charming Angelica, which ſhe had ſecretly by Mr. Henriques? What could be the ſubject of your converſation juſt now?

Chriſaldus. His behaviour ſurprized me too.

Arnolph. How?

Chriſaldus. My ſiſter had one daughter by a private marriage, which was unknown to the whole family.

Orontes. And for the ſake of keeping it ſecret, her huſband put it out to nurſe in the country, under a feigned name.

Chriſaldus. And at that time he was ſo unfortunate as to be obliged to leave his native country.

Orontes. And in foreign countries to undergo a great many dangers.

Chriſaldus. What he was deprived of at home

by villainy and envy, he has gained abroad by his own induſtry.

Orontes. When he returned to France, his firſt care was to make enquiry after the perſon who had the care of his daughter.

Chriſaldus. He was informed by the countrywoman, that you got her into your poſſeſſion, when ſhe was but four years old.

Orontes. As ſhe was very poor, and you of a charitable diſpoſition, ſhe gave up the child.

Chriſaldus. And he has brought the woman here, to his great joy.

Orontes. In a little time ſhe will be here to clear up the matter.

Chriſaldus to Arnolph.] I have a tolerable good gueſs how you muſt be mortified by this, but fortune is kind to you; and, as to avoid being a cuckold is your very great happineſs, you are ſure to attain it by avoiding matrimony.

Arnolph turning away in a great fury, and unable to ſpeak.

Ah!

SCENE THE LAST.

HENRIQUES, ORONTES, CHRISALDUS, AGNES, HORACE.

ORONTES.

WHAT makes him run away without ſpeaking?

Horace. I will acquaint you with the whole of this odd affair. Father, the ſame thing which your prudence intended for this lovely girl, is come to paſs by accident; the tender ties of mutual love

engaged me ſtrictly. She is the very perſon you came in ſearch of, and I thought you would have been diſobliged at my refuſal, on her account.

Henriques. From the firſt minute I ſaw her, I had not the ſmalleſt doubt of it. From that time my heart has yearned after her. Oh, my daughter! I yield to ſuch tender tranſports.

Chriſaldus. With all my heart, I could do ſo, brother, as well as you; but let us go into the houſe to clear up matters, this is not a proper place; let us diſcharge the obligations we owe our friend, and return thanks to heaven, which orders every thing for the beſt.

THE END.

THE

SCHOOL FOR WIVES

CRITICISED.

A

COMEDY.

The SCHOOL *for* WIVES CRITICISED, *a Comedy of One Act, acted at the Theatre of the Palace-Royal the 1st of June* 1663.

THE criticisms upon the comedy of the SCHOOL for WIVES were for a long time no otherwise opposed by Moliere, than by the continued representations of it, which were always crowded, nor was he at the least pains to suppress them, in part at least, till the month of June, 1663, when he brought out his comedy of the SCHOOL for WIVES CRITICISED. The subject seemed only proper for a dissertation, and of course admitted of neither intrigue nor catastrophe: But the author always kept in view the object which a comic writer should never lose sight of, in whatever kind of performances he brings on the stage. He knew, from what had passed in the polite assemblies of Paris, whilst the SCHOOL for WIVES was talked of, to draw a faithful picture of one part of civil life, by copying the language and character of the common conversations of the people of fashion. He seems to have had it as much in view, by his choice of ridiculous characters, to satirize his censurers, as to apologize for his piece: seduced perhaps by the tendency of human spleen, which makes people think, that by attacking others is the best way to defend themselves. Bourfalt played the Counter-Critick, or the Painter's Picture, at the Hotel de Bourgogne, at the same time, in which he followed Moliere's plan and manner, but went

too far in ſuppoſing a known key to the SCHOOL for WIVES, which pointed out the originals copied from nature.

ACTORS.

URANIA.
ELIZA.
CLIMENE.
THE MARQUIS.
DORANTES, or the KNIGHT.
LYSIDAS, a Poet.
GALOPIN, a Footman.

SCENE PARIS, in Urania's houſe.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES CRITICISED.

SCENE I.

URANIA, ELIZA.

URANIA.

WHAT, is there nobody come to visit you, cousin?

Eliza. Not a creature.

Urania. Indeed I am amazed that none of us have had company to-day.

Eliza. I am surprized too; it is not common, as all the saunterers about court generally resort to your house.

Urania. I confess the afternoon appears long to me.

Eliza. And very short to me.

Urania. It is common, cousin, for solitude to be agreeable to fine wits.

Eliza. Your humble servant; you are sensible I do not affect to be a wit.

Urania. I own, for my part, I love company.

Eliza. Company is agreeable to me too, but only a select party; the many tiresome visits one is obliged to endure amongst your other sorts makes me admire solitude.

Urania. Your delicacy is too great to be fond of select company only.

Eliza. I think it is too great complaisance to be equally fond of all company.

Urania. The extravagant divert me, and reasonable people give me pleasure.

Eliza. Really, extravagant people are seldom entertaining after the second visit, their company soon grows tiresome. But let us talk on that head; will you not rid me of your trifling Marquis? Do you suppose that I shall always hold out against his continual jokes?

Urania. It is a fashionable language at court, which they make themselves merry with.

Eliza. It is bad for those who do so, and rack their brains all the day to converse in this stupid jargon. A pretty thing to bring into the conversation of the Louvre, your double entendres, raked together from the kennels of Halles and Place Maubert! A fine manner of jesting for courtiers, and of a man's shewing his wit by coming and saying: Madam, you are at the Place Royal, and all the world sees you three leagues from Paris; for every body sees you with a good eye; because Boneuil is a village at three leagues distant from hence! Is it not very gallant, and very witty? And have not they who hit upon these pretty puns, reason to be proud of them?

Urania. They do not, at the same time, speak this as a piece of wit, for most of those people who affect this language know that it is ridiculous.

Eliza. It is still worse to study to repeat silly things, and to be sorry jesters on purpose. I think them much less excusable on that account, and I know very well to what I would condemn these joking gentlemen.

Urania. Come, let us have done with this affair, it warms you too much. I think Dorantes is long in coming to sup with us.

Eliza. He may have forgot it probably, and—

SCENE II.

GALOPIN, URANIA, ELIZA.

GALOPIN.

CLIMENE is come to pay you a visit, Madam.

Urania. Oh! bless me! what a visit is this!

Eliza. In this manner heaven punishes you for your dislike of retirement.

Urania. Haste and tell her that I am from home.

Galopin. She is informed already that you are here.

Urania. Who was so silly as to tell her that?

Galopin. I, madam.

Urania. The devil is in the boy; I shall teach you to give answers before I am acquainted with it.

Galopin. Madam, I will go and contradict it.

Urania. Hold, you little fool, as you have blundered, let her come up stairs.

Galopin. She is still conversing with a man in the street.

Urania. Oh! couſin, how this viſit perplexes me juſt now!

Eliza. Really the woman is exceſſively troubleſome: I always hated her, and looked upon her as one of the ſtupideſt perſons that ever pretended to common ſenſe.

Urania. The epithet is rather ſtrong.

Elvira. In juſtice ſhe deſerves this and more, I never ſaw a perſon ſo affected.

Urania. Yet ſhe would ſeem quite the reverſe.

Elvira. Indeed ſhe would appear otherwiſe, but ſhe is ſo formal, that her whole body ſeems as if it were out of joint; her head, lips and ſhoulders appear as if they went by clock-work. She affects a languiſhing manner of ſpeaking, rolls her eyes to make them appear large, and draws up her mouth to make it look ſmall.

Urania. Huſh! what if ſhe ſhould hear you thus--

Eliza. No, no, ſhe is not ſo near. Well do I remember the evening that ſhe wanted to ſee Damon, on account of his reputation, and the things he has publiſhed! You are acquainted with the man, and how indolent he is in keeping up a converſation. She gave him an invitation to ſup, with half a dozen other people, imagining he would entertain them with his wit; but never did he appear ſo ſimple; the company expected that he would divert them by his jeſts, and that he had ſo much wit as to make extemporary repartees upon every thing that was ſaid, and even not to call for any thing but with a witticiſm; but his ſilence ſurpriſed them, and he gave the lady as little pleaſure as ſhe gave me.

Urania. Be ſilent. I will go to the room-door and receive her.

Eliza. Hear one word more. What an admirable union it would be between a she-coxcomb and a jester! I wish she were married to him.

Urania. Here she comes; be silent.

SCENE III.

CLIMENE, URANIA, ELIZA, GALOPIN.

URANIA.

IT is very late indeed that—

Climene. Order a chair directly, for God's sake.

Urania to Galopin.] Make haste, and bring an armed chair here.

Climene. Oh! Heavens!

Urania. What is the matter then?

Climene. I can support no longer.

Urania. What is the matter with you?

Climene. I faint.

Urania. Are you seized with vapours?

Climene. No.

Urania. Shall I unlace you?

Climene. O no. Oh!

Urania. What is your illness? and when were you seized?

Climene. I came from court three hours ago, and was ill then.

Urania. How?

Climene. I have been punished for my sins, by being present at the performing of that vile rhapsody, the School for Wives. It occasioned me a fainting fit, which I have not yet recovered, nor shall I be well these two weeks.

Eliza. We get illnesses without expecting them.

Urania. My cousin and I must be of very different constitutions from you, as we saw the same piece performed the day before yesterday, and both came home merry and well.

Climene. Have you seen it?

Urania. Yes, and heard it from beginning to end.

Climene. My dear, did it not throw you into fits?

Urania. Thank God I am not so delicate, and I really think this play should rather mend people, than make them sick.

Climene. Bless me! what do you say? will a person who has the least share of sense, advance this proposition? Can any person, with impunity, quarrel with reason, as you do? And can there really be a mind so famished for drollery, as to taste the silly things this play is made up of? I really could not find the least grain of sense in it: children by the ear, had, to my thinking, a detestable gout: the cream tart turned my stomach; and I thought I should have thrown up all the porridge.

Eliza. Heavens! most elegantly spoken! I should have thought this piece had been good; but the lady has so persuasive an eloquence, she turns things in so agreeable a manner, that one must be of her opinion in spite of one's self.

Urania. For my part, I am not so complaisant; and to tell you my real thoughts, I look upon this comedy to be one of the most diverting the author ever wrote.

Climene. Oh! you make me pity you, to talk in this manner; I cannot bear this obscurity of discernment. Can one who has the least virtue, find any thing agreeable in a piece that keeps one's

modesty under a perpetual alarm, and sullies the imagination at every turn?

Eliza. What a pretty manner of speaking is that? How terribly rough you play, madam, in criticism? Moliere is much to be pitied when he has such an enemy as you.

Climene. Believe me, my dear, correct in good earnest your judgment; and for your honour do not let any body know that you were pleased with this comedy.

Urania. Why really I saw nothing in it so shocking to modesty as you say.

Climene. The whole of it is so; and it is impossible for a virtuous woman to see it without confusion, there is so much ordure in it.

Urania. You must have a particular discernment then for ordure; for I saw none in it.

Climene. It is undoubtedly, because you will not see it; for in short, all this ordure is, thank heaven, naked to the eye; it has not the least cover to conceal it, and the nudity of it shocks the boldest eyes.

Eliza. Oh!

Climene. Ha, ha, ha.

Urania. Pray point me out some of this ordure you speak of, if you please.

Climene. Lack-a-day! is it necessary to point it out?

Urania. Yes; I only ask of you one passage that was very shocking to you.

Climene. Needs there any other than the scene wherein Agnes tells what they took from her.

Urania. And is there the least smuttiness in that?

Climene. Ah!

Urania. Pray?

Climene. Fy.

Urania. Nay, but?

Climene. I have nothing to say to you.

Urania. For my part, I do not see the least harm in it.

Climene. So much the worse for you.

Urania. Rather so much the better, I think. I observe things on the side that is shewn me; and do not turn them about, to find what I ought not to see.

Climene. A lady's modesty—

Urania. Consists not in grimace. It ill becomes one to be wiser than those who are wise: affectation in this affair is worse than every thing else; and nothing appears to me so foolish as that delicacy of honour which takes every thing in a wrong light, gives a criminal sense to the most innocent words, and is offended at the shadow of things. Believe me, they who make so much ado are not esteemed the most virtuous women. On the contrary, their mysterious severity, and affected grimace provoke the censure of every body upon the actions of their lives. People are glad to discover any thing to carp at; and to give you an instance, there was some ladies at this play the other day, over against the box we were in, who by the looks they affected during the whole piece, the turning aside their heads, and the hiding their faces, occasioned several silly things being said on their conduct, all round them, that would never have been said without this; and even one of the footmen cried out aloud, that they were more chaste in their ears than all the rest of their bodies.

Climene. In ſhort, one muſt be blind in this piece, and not ſeem to ſee things.

Urania. One ought not to ſee in it what is not in it.

Climene. Ah! I maintain it once more, that the ſmuttineſs in it puts out one's eyes.

Urania. And I do not think ſo.

Climene. What? does not Agnes, in the paſſage we are ſpeaking of, ſay what viſibly ſhocks modeſty?

Urania. No truly: ſhe ſays not one word but what, of itſelf, is decent enough; and if you will conceive ſomething elſe as couched under it, it is you who make the ordure, and not ſhe, ſince ſhe ſpeaks of nothing but the ribbon which was taken from her.

Climene. Hoh! Ribbon as long as you pleaſe, but that *my* that ſhe ſtops at is not put there for nothing. Comical thoughts ariſe upon this *my*. This *my* is furiouſly ſcandalous; and ſay what you can, you can never defend the inſolence of it.

Eliza. True, couſin, I am for the lady againſt this *my*. *My* is to the laſt degree inſolent, and you are in the wrong to defend this *my*.

Climene. It has an obſcenity that one cannot bear.

Eliza. How do you call that word, madam?

Climene. Obſcenity, madam.

Eliza. Hoh! good lack-a-day! Obſcenity. I do not underſtand this word, but I think it is the prettieſt I ever heard.

Climene. In ſhort, you ſee your own relation takes my part.

Urania. O dear! ſhe is a tattling girl, who

ſpeaks contrary to what ſhe thinks. You will not much depend upon her if you will believe me.

Eliza. Fy! how cruel you are to make the lady ſuſpect me! conſider a little what condition I ſhould be in ſhould ſhe believe what you ſay. Am I ſo far unhappy, madam, that you ſhould entertain this thought of me?

Climene. No, no, I regard not her words, I think you more ſincere than ſhe ſays.

Eliza. Oh! you are infinitely in the right, madam; and you do me juſtice when you believe I think you the moſt engaging perſon I ever beheld; that I enter into all your ſentiments, and am charmed with every expreſſion you utter.

Climene. Pray ſpeak not ſo affectedly.

Eliza. One ſees it, madam, very plainly, and that every thing is natural in you. Your words, the tone of your voice, your looks, your gait, your action and your dreſs, have an air of quality in them that inchant people. I ſtudy you by my eyes, by my ears; and am ſo full of you, that I endeavour to imitate you in every thing.

Climene. You are pleaſed to banter me, madam.

Eliza. Pardon me, madam, who could banter you?

Climene. I am no good model, madam.

Eliza. Oh! yes, madam.

Climene. You flatter me, madam.

Eliza. Indeed, madam, I do not.

Climene. Pray, madam, have a little mercy on me.

Eliza. I have ſo much mercy on you, that I do not ſay half of what I think of you.

Climene. Oh heavens! Let us drop it, pray.

You would throw me into a horrible confusion. [To Urania.] You see in short, madam, we are both against you, and obstinacy sits so ill upon witty people that——

SCENE IV.

THE MARQUIS, CLIMENE, GALOPIN, URANIA, ELIZA.

GALOPIN at the chamber door.

PRAY stop, Sir, if you please.

The Marquis. Dost thou know who I am, fellow?

Galopin. I know you very well, but you shall not go in.

The Marquis. Hey, what a bustle is here, you little skip-jack.

Galopin. It is not fair to endeavour to get in, in spite of people's teeth.

The Marquis. I will see thy mistress.

Galopin. She is not within, I tell you.

The Marquis. Why there she is in her chamber.

Galopin. That is true, she is there; but she is not at home for all that.

Urania. What is the meaning of this? what is the matter there?

The Marquis. It is your footman, madam, who is playing the fool.

Galopin. I tell him, madam, you are not at home, and yet he will come in whether I will or no.

Urania. And why did you tell the gentleman that I am not at home?

Galopin. You was very angry with me the other day for telling him you were at home.

Urania. See the insolence of this knave! Pray, Sir, do not believe what he says; it is a little giddy brained rogue, and he takes you for another person.

The Marquis. I saw it plainly, madam, and had it not been in respect to you, I should have taught him to know people of quality.

Eliza. My cousin is much obliged to you for this deference.

Urania to Galopin.] A chair there, sauce-box.

Galopin. Is not there one?

Urania. Bring it hither.

[Galopin pushes the chair rudely, and goes out.

SCENE V.

THE MARQUIS, CLIMENE, URANIA, ELIZA.

THE MARQUIS.

THAT lacquey of yours, madam, has a contempt for my person.

Eliza. He would be much to blame, certainly.

The Marquis. It is perhaps because I pay interest for my ill looks. [Laughs.] He, he, he!

Eliza. He will know people of quality better when he grows older.

The Marquis. What were you talking about, ladies, when I interrupted you?

Urania. About the play of The School for Wives.

The Marquis. I am but just come from it.

Climene. Well, Sir, what is your opinion of it?

The Marquis. Why, I think it is very fooliſh.

Climene. Oh! how glad am I of that!

The Marquis. The moſt villainous thing in the world. What the duce! I could ſcarce get a place. I thought I ſhould have been ſtifled at the door, and never was I ſo trampled upon. See, pray, what a condition my rollers and ribbons are in.

Eliza. Why really, this cries vengeance againſt The School for Wives, and you juſtly condemn it.

The Marquis. I dare ſay there never was ſuch a wretched performance.

Urania. But here comes Dorantes, whom we expected.

SCENE VI.

DORANTES, THE MARQUIS, CLIMENE, ELIZA, URANIA.

DORANTES.

DO not let me diſturb you, but pray continue your diſcourſe. The ſubject you are upon has been the general one through Paris theſe four days; and never was any thing more diverting than the different judgments that are paſſed upon it. For the very things which I have heard it eſteemed for by ſome, have been condemned by others.

Urania. Here is the marquis ſpeaks very ill of it.

The Marquis. It is true. I think it deteſtable, i'gad; deteſtable to the laſt degree of deteſtable; what one may call deteſtable.

Dorantes. And I, my dear marquis, think the opinion deteſtable.

The Marquis. How, knight, do you pretend to vindicate the piece.

Dorantes. Yes, I do pretend to vindicate it.

The Marquis. I'gad, I warrant it deteſtable.

Dorantes. That warrant is not city-ſecurity. But, marquis, pray, what makes this play deteſtable?

The Marquis. What makes it deteſtable?

Dorantes. Yes.

The Marquis. It is deteſtable, becauſe it is ſo.

Dorantes. There is not a word to ſay after this; the cauſe is ended. But yet inform us, and tell us what faults it has.

The Marquis. What do I know? I did not ſo much as give myſelf the trouble to hear it. But in ſhort, I know I never beheld any thing ſo villainous; and Dorillas, who ſat oppoſite to me, was of my opinion.

Dorantes. The authority is good, thou art excellently ſupported.

The Marquis. One needs only obſerve the continual loud laughs ſet up in the pit: nothing more is neceſſary to prove it is good for nothing.

Dorantes. Then, marquis, you are one of thoſe fine gentlemen who reckon the pit even deſtitute of common ſenſe, and would be grieved to laugh along with that, though it were at the beſt thing in the world; I ſaw the other day one of our friends upon the ſtage, who made himſelf ridiculous by this. He heard the whole piece with the moſt ſullen gravity imaginable; and every thing that made others merry made him frown. He ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, when other people laughed, and looked with

pity upon the pit; and sometimes again looking down with vexation, he cried out aloud, laugh then, pit, laugh. It was really a second comedy to see our friend so vexed; he shewed away like a generous fellow to the whole assembly, and every body allowed no man could play his part better than he did. Learn, marquis, you and others with you, that good sense has no determined place at a play; that the difference betwixt half a guinea and half a crown makes nothing at all to a good taste; and whether standing or sitting one may pass a bad judgment; and that, in short, to take it in general, I should depend a good deal upon the approbation of the pit, because amongst those who compose it, there are many who are capable of judging of a piece according to rules, and because others judge by a proper method of judging, which is to be guided by things, and not to have any blind prejudice or affected complaisance, nor foolish delicacy.

The Marquis. So thou art a defender of the pit, knight? I'gad, I am glad of it, and I shall not fail to acquaint it thou art one of its friends. Ha, ha, ha, he!

Dorantes. Laugh as much as you please, I am for good sense, and hate such foolish people as thou art. It vexes me to see people make fools of themselves notwithstanding their quality; your folks who are always decisive, and speak boldly of every thing without knowing a word of the matter; who shall clap ye all the bad parts of a play, and not so much as stir at those that are good; who upon viewing a picture, or hearing a concert of music, both blame and praise every thing by rule of contraries; who pick up terms of art wherever

they can, which they get by heart, and never fail to disjoint them, and displace them. 'Sdeath, gentlemen, be silent. Since heaven has not blessed you with the knowledge of one sublunary thing, do not make yourselves a laughing-stock to those who hear you; and consider that by being silent, you may perhaps be thought clever fellows.

The Marquis. I'gad, knight, thou carriest this matter——

Dorantes. Why, marquis, I do not speak to you; it is to a dozen of those gentry who disgrace the courtiers by their extravagant manners, and make the people believe we are all alike. For my part, I will do all I can to justify myself from it, and I will so rally them wherever I meet them, that at last they shall grow wise.

The Marquis. Has Lysander any wit, think you?

Dorantes. Yes, doubtless, and a good deal too.

Urania. That is what no body can deny him.

The Marquis. Ask him what he thinks of The School for Wives; you will see he will tell you it is not to his taste.

Dorantes. Alas! numbers of people are spoiled by too much wit, who see things imperfectly by strength of light, and who would even be sorry to be of other folks opinion, that they may have the honour of deciding.

Urania. Why really this friend of ours is of that sort: he must be the first of his opinion, and have others wait through respect to his judgment: every one's approbation that gets the start of his is an insult upon his understanding, which he highly revenges by taking the opposite party: he would have folks consult him in every witty affair; and I am

certain had the author shewn him his play before he represented it, he would have thought it the best piece that possibly could be written.

The Marquis. And what say you of the marchioness Araminta, who publishes it about town for a dreadful one, and says she could never endure the ordure it is full of?

Dorantes. I shall say she deserves the character she has assumed, and that there are persons who make themselves ridiculous for affecting too much honour. Though she is witty, she has followed the ill example of those, who, growing old, want to make amends for what they see they have lost, and imagine the grimace of a scrupulous prudery will supply the defect of youth and beauty. This same lady carries the affair further than any body; the ingeniousness of her scruples discovers obsceni ty where it is impossible for any body else to see it. They tell ye that these scruples proceed so far as even to disfigure our language, and that there are very few words in it which the severity of this lady will not retrench either the head or the tail, on account of the immodest syllables she finds in them.

Urania. You are a perfect wag, knight.

The Marquis. In short, knight, you think to defend your play by satirizing those who condemn it.

Dorantes. Not at all; but this lady, in my opinion is unjustly scan———

Eliza. Softly, Sir knight; there may be other ladies besides her who may be of the same sentiments.

Dorantes. I very well know that you are not so, and that when you saw this performance——

Eliza. It is true, but I am now quite of a dif-

ferent way of thinking, and this lady [pointing to Climene.] ſupports her opinion by ſuch convincing reaſons, that ſhe carried me quite on her ſide.

Dorantes to Climene.] Oh! madam, I aſk pardon: and, if you pleaſe, I will unſay, for love of you, all that I have ſaid.

Climene. I will not have it to be for love of me, but for the love of reaſon; for in a word, that piece, to take it right, is abſolutely indefenſible; and I do not conceive———

Urania. Hoh! here is the author, Mr. Lyſidas; he comes *a propos*, for this affair. Take your chair, Mr. Lyſidas, and ſit down there.

SCENE VII.

LYSIDAS, CLIMENE, URANIA, ELIZA, DORANTES, THE MARQUIS.

LYSIDAS.

I AM rather late in coming to you, madam; but the lady marchioneſs I was ſpeaking to you about made me read my piece to her, and the praiſes given it have detained me longer than I thought of.

Eliza. Praiſe is a wonderful charm to detain an author.

Urania. Sit down then, Mr. Lyſidas, we ſhall read your piece after ſupper.

Lyſidas. All they who were there are to come the firſt night, and have promiſed me to do their duty as they ſhould do.

Urania. I believe it; but pray once more pleaſe

to sit down. We are upon an affair here which I should be very glad to go on with.

Lysidas. You will take a box, I hope, madam, for that night.

Urania. We shall see. Pray let us continue our discourse.

Lysidas. Most part of them are already taken.

Urania. It is mighty well. In short, I wanted you when you came, for every body is against me here.

Eliza to Urania, and pointing to Dorantes.] He was on your side at first; but now he knows the lady is at the head of the opposite party, I suppose you have nothing to do but seek out for other assistance.

Climene. No, no. I would not have him neglect his court to miss your cousin, I allow his wit to be on the side of his heart.

Dorantes. With this permission, madam, I shall presume to defend myself.

Urania. But first, pray let us know the sentiments of Mr. Lysidas.

Lysidas. Upon what, madam?

Urania. Upon the subject of The School for Wives.

Lysidas. Ha, ha!

Dorantes. What is your opinion of it?

Lysidas. I have nothing to say upon that head; and you know that amongst us authors we ought to be vastly careful how we speak of each others performances.

Dorantes. But pray, between us, what do you think of this comedy?

Lysidas. I, Sir?

Urania. Tell us your opinion honestly.

Lyſidas. I think it an excellent performance.

Dorantes. Really?

Lyſidas. Really; why not? Is it not indeed a very fine one?

Dorantes. Um, um, you are a cruel youth, Mr. Lyſidas; you do not ſpeak as you think.

Lyſidas. Pardon me.

Dorantes. Lack-a day, I know you; do not diſſemble.

Lyſidas. I, Sir?

Dorantes. I ſee plainly that you ſpeak well of this piece only out of modeſty; and that at the bottom of your heart you are of the opinion of a great many people, who think it bad.

Lyſidas. Ha, ha, ha!

Dorantes. Nay, confeſs that this comedy is a fooliſh piece.

Lyſidas. Your connoiſſeurs do not approve of it.

The Marquis. Faith, knight, thou haſt it, thou art paid for thy raillery. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Dorantes. Laugh on, my dear marquis, laugh on.

The Marquis. You ſee we have the learned on our ſide.

Dorantes. It is true, Mr. Lyſidas's judgment is ſomething conſiderable, but he will excuſe me if I do not yield for all this; and ſince I have preſumed to defend myſelf againſt the lady's ſentiments, he will not take it amiſs if I oppoſe his.

Eliza. What, when you ſee the lady, my lord marquis, and Mr. Lyſidas againſt you, dare you reſiſt ſtill? Fie, that's acting with a bad grace.

Climene. For my part, what confounds me is,

that ſenſible people can take it in their heads to protect the ſtupidity of this piece.

The Marquis. Demme, madam, it is a wretched performance.

Dorantes. That is ſoon ſaid, marquis, there is nothing more eaſy than to cut the matter ſhort thus, and I do not ſee any thing can withſtand thy powerful deciſions.

The Marquis. 'Slife, all the other comedians who have ſeen it ſpeak ill of it.

Dorantes. Oh! I ſay not a word more, you are very right, marquis, ſince all the other comedians ſpeak ill of it, we muſt certainly believe them. They are all diſcerning people, and ſpeak without intereſt; there is no more to be ſaid, I yield.

Climene. Yield, or not yield, I know very well you ſhall never perſuade me to endure the immodeſty of this piece; no more than you ſhall the diſobliging ſatire in it againſt the ladies.

Urania. For my part, I ſhall take care not to be offended at it, and to take nothing to my own account that is ſaid in it. This ſort of ſatire falls directly upon the manners, and hits the perſons only by rebound. Let us not apply to ourſelves the ſtrokes of a general cenſure; let us profit by the leſſon, if we can, without making as if they ſpoke to us. We ſhould view all the ridiculous paintings that are drawn upon the ſtage, without being uneaſy at them. They are public mirrors, where we are never to declare that we behold ourſelves; and it is downright to tax ourſelves with a crime, to be ſcandalized at the reproof.

Climene. As to myſelf, I do not ſpeak of theſe things in regard to any part I can have in them; and I think I behave myſelf in ſuch a manner as

not to fear being looked for among the paintings drawn for diſorderly women.

Eliza. You, madam, will never be looked for there; your conduct is ſufficiently known by every body.

Urania to Climene.] Therefore, madam, I ſaid nothing that can reach you; and my words, like the ſatire in comedy, reſt in general poſitions.

Climene. I do not doubt it, madam. But however let us paſs this point over. I do not know what reception you will give the reflections thrown on our ſex in a certain part of the piece; I confeſs it vexes me to ſee this impudent author have the aſſurance to call us animals.

Urania. Do not you obſerve it is a ridiculous character he makes ſpeak it?

Dorantes. And then, madam, do not you know that the reproaches of lovers never give ſcandal? that it is much the ſame with furious as with fondling lovers, and that on ſuch occaſions the ſtrangeſt words, and even ſomething ſtill worſe, are taken very often as marks of kindneſs by the very perſons who receive them.

Eliza. Say what you will I can digeſt this no more than the porridge and cream-tart the lady juſt now ſpoke of.

The Marquis. O! yes, faith, cream-tart; that is what I was obſerving a while ago; cream-tart! How am I obliged to you, madam, for having reminded me of cream-tart! Are there apples enough in Normandy for cream-tart? Cream-tart, i'gad, cream-tart!

Dorantes. Well, what mean you with your cream-tart?

The Marquis. 'Slife, cream tart, knight!

Dorantes. But what?

The Marquis. Cream-tart!

Dorantes. Pray let me know your reasons.

The Marquis. Cream-tart!

Urania. But you should explain your meaning, methinks.

The Marquis. Cream-tart, madam!

Urania. What objection can you make to it?

The Marquis. I? Nothing: cream-tart!

Urania. Oh! I give it up.

Eliza. My lord marquis goes the right way to work, and plays ye off finely. But I wish Mr. Lysidas would finish, and give them a little touch or two in his manner.

Lysidas. I am very favourable to other people's performances, and do not chuse to find fault with them. But in short, no offence to the friendship the knight declares for the author, you must own to me these sort of plays are not properly plays, and that there is a great deal of difference between all these trifles, compared with the beauty of serious pieces. Yet all the world gives into it now-a-days; there's no thronging after any thing but this; and you see nothing but a frightful solitude at the grand works, when these silly things shall have all Paris flocking to see them. I own to you my heart sometimes bleeds at it, and it is a scandal to all France.

Climene. It is true, people's taste is strangely corrupted in this point, and the age vulgarizes furiously.

Eliza. That vulgarizes is very pretty; pray did you invent it, madam?

Climene. Ah!

Eliza. I am much in doubt about it.

Dorantes. You think then, Mr. Lysidas, that all the wit and all the beauty lie in serious poems? and that comic pieces are trifles which deserve not to be praised?

Urania. For my part, that is not my sentiment. Tragedy is undoubtedly very fine when it is well touched; but comedy has its charms, and I think one is as difficult as the other.

Dorantes. Certainly, madam; and for the difficulty, should you place it more on the side of comedy, perhaps you would not be in the wrong: for I really think it much easier to soar upon grand sentiments, to defy fortune in verse, to accuse the destinies, and reproach the gods, than to enter properly into the ridicule of men, and to make their faults appear agreeable on the stage. When you paint heroes, you do what you have amind, these are portraits drawn at pleasure, where we seek not for resemblance; you have only to follow the traces of an exalted imagination, which frequently forsakes the true to hit the marvellous. But when you paint men, nature must be your guide. People expect resemblance in these portraits; you have done nothing if you do not display the people of the age so as to make them known. In a word, in serious pieces it is sufficient to escape censure to say things that are well written and good sense. But this is not sufficient in the others; you must be merry, and it is a strange enterprize to make your better sort of people laugh.

Climene. I reckon myself among the better sort of people, and yet I found not a single word in it to make any body laugh.

The Marquis. Faith, nor I neither.

Dorantes. As for you, marquis, I am not sur-

prized at it, it is becauſe you found no puns in it.

Lyſidas. Faith, Sir, what we meet with there is not much better, and in my opinion all the raillery that is in it is very inſipid.

Dorantes. The court thought not ſo——

Lyſidas. Oh! the court, Sir?

Dorantes. Speak out, Mr. Lyſidas. I ſee plainly you mean that the court knows very little about theſe matters; and this is the uſual refuge of you gentlemen authors, in the bad ſucceſs of your works, to accuſe only the injuſtice of the age, and the want of diſcernment in courtiers. Pleaſe to know, Mr. Lyſidas, that courtiers can ſee and hear as well as other people; that folks may be ingenious with a Venice point and a feather, as well as with a bob-peruke; that the grand teſt of all your play is the court; that you muſt ſtudy its taſte to find the art of ſucceeding; there is no place where the deciſions are ſo juſt; and without bringing into the account all the men of learning there, one forms a manner of genius there only by plain natural good ſenſe, and converſation with people of faſhion, who, without compariſon, judge more delicately of things, than all the common-place learning of pedants.

Urania. It is true that if you ſtay but ever ſo ſhort a while there, things enough paſs daily before your eyes to acquire a habit of knowing them; and above all whatever belongs to good or bad raillery.

Dorantes. I own, the court has ſome ridiculous people about it, and I am the firſt, as you may ſee, to banter them. But, faith, there are a great number too amongſt the wits by profeſſion; and if we ridicule ſome marquiſſes, I think there are a good

many more authors to ridicule; and what a droll thing it would be to bring them upon the ſtage, with their learned grimaces, and their fantaſtical refinements; their vicious cuſtom of aſſaſſinating people in their works; their greedineſs of praiſe; their ſparingneſs of thought; their traffic of reputation; and their lines offenſive and defenſive! as alſo their learned wars and combats in proſe and verſe.

Lyſidas. Moliere, Sir, is very happy in having ſo warm a patron as you are. But however, to come to the point, the queſtion in debate is, whether his piece be good; and here I engage myſelf to ſhew there are in the whole upwards of a hundred viſible faults.

Urania. It is an odd thing that you authors ſhould always condemn the pieces which every one runs after, and praiſe thoſe which no body go to.

Dorantes. That is becauſe it is generous to be on the ſide of the afflicted.

Urania. But pray, Mr. Lyſidas, let us ſee ſome of theſe faults that I perceived nothing of.

Lyſidas. They who are maſters of Ariſtotle and Horace ſee immediately, madam, that this comedy offends againſt all the rules of art.

Urania. I confeſs I have no intimacy with theſe gentlemen, and that I am ignorant of the rules of art.

Dorantes. One would think, to hear you talk, that theſe rules of art were the greateſt myſteries in the world; and yet they are nothing but ſome eaſy obſervations, which good ſenſe has made upon what may take away the pleaſure one finds in theſe ſort of poems; and the ſame good ſenſe which made theſe obſervations formerly, eaſily makes

them at all times, without the assistance of Horace and Aristotle. I would be glad to know whether the universal rule is not to please; and whether a piece upon the stage that has gained its end, did not take a right way? Would you have it, that the whole public is mistaken in these matters, and that every one should not be a judge of the pleasure he takes in them?

Urania. I have observed one thing in these gentlemen; it is that those who talk most of rules, and know them better than others, make plays which no body thinks good.

Dorantes. And this, madam, is what shews what little regard ought to be had to their puzzling rules: for in short, if pieces which are according to rule do not please, and those that please are not according to rule, the rules must consequently have been made wrong. Let us therefore despise this chicanery to which they would subject the public taste, and never consult any thing in a play but the effect it has on us. Let us heartily follow the things that take our fancy, and never hunt for reasons to prevent our having pleasure.

Urania. For my part, when I see a play, I only mind whether things touch me; and when I am well diverted by it, I do not enquire whether I was in the wrong, and whether the rules of Aristotle forbad me to laugh.

Dorantes. It is directly like a man who should have found an excellent sauce, and should enquire whether it were made by the rules of a French cook.

Urania. Very true; and I admire at the refinements of certain people in matters wherein we ought to follow our own sense.

Dorantes. You are right, madam, to think all these mysterious refinements impertinent. For, in short, if they take place, we must ever after disbelieve ourselves; our own senses must be slaves in every thing; and even in eating and drinking we must not presume any longer to think any thing good, without leave from these gentlemen adepts.

Lycidas. In short, Sir, your whole reason is, that The School for Wives has pleased; and you should not at all care whether it were done by the rule, provided———

Dorantes. Not so fast, Mr. Lysidas, I do not grant you that. I say plainly the great art is to please, and that this comedy having pleased those it was made for, I think it sufficient for it, and that there is no reason to mind the rest. But withal, I maintain it does not offend against any of the rules you speak of. I have read them, thank heaven, as well as other people, and I could easily make it appear that we have not, perhaps, a more regular piece extant.

Eliza. Courage, Mr. Lysidas, we are undone, if you give way.

Lysidas. How, Sir, the protasis, the epitasis, and the peripetie———

Dorantes. Nay, Mr. Lysidas, you knock us down with your hard words; pray do not seem so learned. Civilize your discourse a little, and speak so that people may understand you. Do you think that a Greek name gives greater force to your reasons? Is it not as pretty to say the exposition of the subject, as the protasis; the plot, as the epitasis, and the unravelling as the peripetie?

Lysidas. These are terms of art, that we are allowed to make use of: but since these words offend your ears, I shall explain myself in another man-

ner; and I desire you would answer me positively to three or four things I am going to say: Can one endure a piece which offends against the proper name of theatrical pieces? For after all, the name of dramatic poem is derived from a Greek word, which signifies to act, to shew that the nature of the poem consists in action; and in this comedy there is no action, but all consists in recitals made by Agnes or by Horace.

The Marquis. Hah! hah! Knight!

Climene. Ingeniously remarked! this is coming to the nicest point of things.

Lysidas. Can any thing be more silly or low, than some words in it, which made every body laugh, and especially that of children by the ear?

Climene. Very well.

Eliza. Oh!

Lysidas. Is not the scene of the footman and the maid within doors very impertinent and tedious?

The Marquis. Indeed it is.

Climene. Certainly.

Eliza. He is in the right.

Lysidas. Does not Arnolph give Horace his money too freely? And since it is the ridiculous character of the piece, should he have made him do the action of a worthy man?

The Marquis. Good. The remark is very just.

Climene. Admirable!

Eliza. Surprizing.

Lysidas. Are not the sermon and the maxims very foolish, and what strike at the respect due to our religion?

The Marquis. Indeed they are.

Climene. Spoke as it ought be.

Eliza. Nothing can be better.

Lyſidas. And that in ſhort, Mr. La Souche, who is made a man of wit, and who appears ſo ſerious in ſeveral paſſages, does he not deſcend to ſomething too comical, and too extravagant in the fifth act, when he tells Agnes the violence of his love, with that wild rolling of his eyes, with thoſe ridiculous ſighs, and thoſe fooliſh tears, which ſet every one a laughing?

The Marquis. Surprizing, faith!

Climene. Marvellous!

Eliza. Well done, Mr. Lyſidas.

Lyſidas. I paſs over numberleſs other things, for fear of being tedious.

The Marquis. Faith, knight, thou art welpaid up now.

Dorantes. Stay a little.

The Marquis. Thou haſt met with thy man.

Dorantes. Perhaps ſo.

The Marquis. Anſwer, anſwer, anſwer, anſwer.

Dorantes. Very willingly. It is———

The Marquis. Anſwer then, prithee.

Dorantes. Permit me then. If———

The Marquis. Egad, I defy thee to anſwer.

Dorantes. Yes, if you talk for ever.

Climene. Pray let us hear what he has to ſay.

Dorantes. Firſt of all, it is not true, to ſay that the whole piece conſiſts only of narration: one ſees abundance of action in it, which paſſes upon the ſtage; and the narrations themſelves are of actions according to the conſtitution of the ſubject; inaſmuch as theſe narrations are all innocently related to an intereſted perſon, who by this means is at every turn thrown into a confuſion, which diverts

the ſpectators, and takes all the meaſures he can upon each information, to ward off the miſchief he dreads.

Urania. For my part, I think the beauty of the ſubject of The School for Wives conſiſts in this continued confidence; and what appears diverting enough to me, is, that a man who has ſenſe, and who is warned of every thing by an innocent creature who is his miſtreſs, and a mar-plot who is his rival, cannot with all this eſcape what happens to him.

The Marquis. Trifles, trifles.

Climene. A mighty anſwer, indeed!

Eliza. Weak reaſons.

Dorantes. As to what regards the children by the ear, it has no jeſt in it but in regard to Arnolph; and the author did not inſert it as a jeſt of itſelf, but only for a thing which characterizes the man, and paints the extravagance ſo much the better, ſince he repeats a trivial, ſilly thing that Agnes had ſaid, as the fineſt thing in the world, and what gives him an inexpreſſible delight.

The Marquis. Wretchedly anſwered.

Climene. It is not ſatisfactory.

Eliza. It is ſaying nothing.

Dorantes. As to his freedom in giving the money, beſides that the letter of his very good friend is a ſufficient ſecurity to him, it is not inconſiſtent that a worthy man may be ridiculous in ſome things. And the ſcene of Allen and Georgetta within doors, which has been thought ſo inſipid by ſome people, is not without proper reaſons; and in the ſame manner that Arnolph, by the innocence of his miſtreſs, is caught, during his journey, upon his return he ſtands a long time at the door,

by the innocence of his ſervants, that he might be thoroughly puniſhed by the very things that he expected would make his precautions ſure.

The Marquis. Theſe reaſons are trifling.

Climene. This is all to no purpoſe.

Eliza. It is mean.

Dorantes. The very religious people who heard the moral diſcourſe, which you call a ſermon, ſaw nothing that ſtruck at what you were ſpeaking of; and certainly the extravagance of Arnolph, and the innocence of her he ſpeaks to, juſtifies theſe words of hell and boiling cauldrons. And in the fifth act, the amorous tranſports, which you think a burleſque, and extravagant, is certainly a ſatire upon lovers, and I dare ſay the moſt ſerious people, upon the like occaſions, will ſay and do things—

The Marquis. Indeed, knight, you had better be ſilent.

Dorantes. True; but really if we were to be attentive to ourſelves in our amorous moments—

The Marquis. I will not hear you.

Dorantes. Do hear me. Are not we in the violence of the paſſion—

The Marquis. Tol, lol, derol. [Sings.

Dorontes. How——

The Marquis. Fa, lol, fa, lol, fa, lol, derol.

Dorantes. I do not know whether——

The Marquis. Tal, lal, tal, lal, deral.

Urania. I am of opinion——

The Marquis. Fa, lol, fa lol, fa, lol, derol.

Urania. To amend our School for Wives, I think one might make a little comedy out of the merry things that have paſſed in our diſputes.

Dorantes. Very true.

The Marquis. I think the part you would play, knight, would not be to your advantage at all.

Dorantes. That is true, marquis.

Climene. If they would treat the affair juſt in the manner that it has paſſed, I for my part would wiſh it were done.

Eliza. I would freely give them my character.

Lyſidas. And I mine.

Urania. As every body would be pleaſed, do you, knight, take notes of it, and give it to Moliere, to make it up into a play, as you know he can do it eaſily.

Climene. It would not be any thing in his praiſe, ſo he would ſet no value upon it.

Urania. No, no, I know him very well; if people crowd to his pieces, he does not value who laughs at them.

Dorantes. But I do not ſee how we can end this diſpute; as there is neither diſcovery nor marriage, we cannot find an unravelling of the plot.

Urania. We muſt contrive ſomething for that.

SCENE THE LAST.

CLIMENE, URANIA, ELIZA, DORANTES, THE MARQUIS, LYSIDAS, GALOPIN.

GALOPIN.

MADAM, ſupper is ready.

Dorantes. This is the very thing we wanted to clear up our plot; we could think of nothing more natural. There ſhall be a ſtrong diſpute on both ſides, no body ſhall yield; a ſervant ſhall acquaint them that ſupper is upon the table, and they ſhall all go to it.

Urania. We ſhall finiſh here, and the play cannot end better.

THE END.

THE IMPROMPTU OF VERSAILLES.

A COMEDY.

The IMPROMPTU *of* VERSAILLES, *a Comedy of One Act, acted at Verſailles 14th of October 1663, and at Paris, at the Theatre-Royal, the 4th of November the ſame Year.*

MOLIERE, being greatly favoured by the king, and having juſt received ſome freſh marks of his kindneſs, thought that he ought in his preſence, and before the whole court, to deſtroy the ſuſpicion of his having drawn the characters of particular perſons in the SCHOOL for WIVES, which might have proved diſadvantageous to him; and for this purpoſe brought on the IMPROMPTU of VERSAILLES. He does not ſpare Bourſalt in this piece, and always mentions him with the utmoſt contempt: but his talents and genius were only affected by this contempt; he had attacked Moliere in a more ſenſible part. We ſhould have thought it a curioſity, had the author's works been very ancient, to find in this comedy the time of his marriage with Bejart the comedian's daughter. (See the IMPROMPTU of VERSAILLES, ſcene 1ſt. page 272.)

ACTORS.

MOLIERE, a ridiculous marquis.
BRECOURT, a man of quality.
LA GRANGE, a ridiculous marquis.
DU CROISY, a poet.
Mrs. DU PARC, a ceremonious marchioneſs.
Mrs. BEJART, a prude.
Mrs. DE BRIE, a ſage coquette.
Mrs. MOLIERE, a ſatirical wit.
Mrs. DU CROISY, a whining gypſey.
Mrs. HERVEY, a conceited chamber-maid.
TORRILLIERE, an impertinent marquis.
BEJART, a buſy-body.
FOUR ATTENDANTS.

SCENE Verſailles, in the king's anti-chamber.

THE IMPROMPTU OF VERSAILLES.

SCENE I.

MOLIERE, BRECOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MRS. DU PARC, MRS. BEJART, MRS. DE BRIE, MRS. MOLIERE, MRS. DU CROISY, MRS. HERVEY.

MOLIERE alone, talking to the players, who are behind the ſcenes.

YOU are not in earneſt ſure, gentlemen and ladies, will you not come hither? Devil take the people! Mr. Brecourt.

Brecourt behind the ſcenes.] What do you want?

Moliere. Mr. La Grange.

La Grange. What is the matter?

Moliere. Mr. Du Croisy.

Du Croisy. What want you?

Moliere. Mrs. Du Parc?

Mrs. Du Parc. Well?

Moliere. Mrs. Bejart.

Mrs. Bejart. Who is there?

Moliere. Mrs. De Brie.

Mrs. De Brie. What now?

Moliere. Mrs. Du Croisy.

Mrs. Du Croisy. What is the matter?

Moliere. Mrs. Hervey.

Mrs. Hervey. I am here.

Moliere. I believe these people will make me mad! [Enter La Grange, Du Croisy, Brecourt] 'Sdeath, gentlemen, I will go distracted.

Brecourt. What can we do? You distract us to oblige us to play in this manner, when we have not our parts.

Moliere. Actors are sad animals to manage! [Enter Mesdemoiselles Bejart, Du Parc, De Brie, Moliere, Du Croisy, and Hervey.]

Mrs. Bejart. Well, what do you intend to do now when we are all here?

Mrs. Du Parc. What do you mean?

Mrs. De Brie. What shall we do?

Moliere. As the king is not come yet, nor will these two hours, let us stay here and rehearse our play, as we are all dressed, and we will see how we can play our parts.

La Grange. How can we play what we are ignorant of?

Mrs. Du Parc. I assure you, I have not one word of my part.

Mrs. De Brie. I am certain that I will have occaſion to be prompted from beginning to end.

Mrs. Bejart. And I am ready to take the book in my hand.

Mrs. Moliere. I am in the ſame way.

Mrs. Hervey. My part is but trifling.

Mrs. Du Croiſy. Mine is but ſmall too, and yet it is very likely I will be out.

Du Croiſy. I would willingly give ten piſtoles to be quit of it.

Brecourt. And I would take twenty good ſtrokes of a cudgel.

Moliere. What would any of you do if you were in my place, you are all ſo diſtreſſed with having a difficult part to play?

Mrs. Bejart. As you wrote the piece, you cannot be afraid of being out, ſo need not complain.

Moliere. Have not I reaſon to ſay, I would give any thing in the world to have it over? may not I fear my memory? but this is trifling; may not an author tremble when a comic performance is expoſed to ſuch an audience as this? to undertake to divert people who ſtrike us with reſpect, and only laugh when they pleaſe? You cannot think the anxiouſneſs of ſucceſs which effects me alone, nothing.

Mrs. Bejart. Then you ſhould not have undertaken to do in a week what you are now afraid of, you ſhould be more cautious.

Moliere. When the king commanded me, I was obliged to do it.

Mrs. Bejart. You might have excuſed yourſelf reſpectfully, by pleading the impoſſibility of doing it in ſo ſhort a time; any body elſe would take care not to expoſe his reputation. What an ad-

vantage will all your enemies make of it! and what will become of you, if the thing do not succeed?

Mrs. De Brie. Really you ſhould have deſired more time; you might have excuſed yourſelf from doing it in ſo little a time.

Moliere. Madam, nothing is ſo agreeable to kings as a ready obedience; obſtacles are very diſagreeable to them: things do not pleaſe but juſt at the time deſired, and it takes away all the pleaſure of their diverſion if they muſt wait for it, as chance pleaſures are the moſt agreeable. We ſhould never conſider ourſelves, when they deſire any thing of us, but ſtudy to pleaſe them; and when they deſire us to do any thing, it is our part immediately to obey their deſires. We had better perform badly, than refuſe to obey them quickly; and if we are not applauded for good performance, we have the credit of being obedient: but let us begin our rehearſal.

Mrs. Bejart. If we do not know our parts, what will you do?

Moliere. Yes you ſhall know them, and if you ſhould be a little imperfect, as it is proſe, and you are acquainted with the ſubject, you may ſupply any deficiency by your own wit.

Mrs. Bejart. I beg your pardon, but proſe is more difficult to ſupply than verſe.

Mrs. Moliere. I think you ſhould have compoſed a comedy which you could have played yourſelf, without any aſſiſtance.

Moliere Hold your tongue, wife, you are a fool.

Mrs. Moliere. I am obliged to you, good huſband. See what an alteration matrimony makes in people! a year and a half ago ſuch words as theſe would never have come from your mouth.

Moliere. Pray hold your peace.

Mrs. Moliere. It is very extraordinary that we ſhould be deprived of all our good qualities by a little ceremony, and that the ſame perſon ſhould appear ſo very different in the eyes of a huſband and a gallant.

Moliere. What a prating is here!

Mrs. Moliere. Upon my word, were I to compoſe a comedy, it would certainly be on that ſubject. I would make the huſbands tremble for the difference there is between their rough manners and the complaiſance of a gallant; I would juſtify the women in ſeveral things they are accuſed with.

Moliere. Well, be ſilent at preſent, we have ſomething elſe to do than prattle now.

Mrs. Bejart. Why did you not make that comedy of comedians that you have ſo long talked of to us, as you were deſired to work on the ſubject of the criticiſm that is made upon you? it was ready invented, and would have come very proper, and ſo much the better, as having undertook to paint you, they opened a way for you to do the ſame, and it may with more propriety be called their picture, than what they have done can be called yours; to imitate a comedian in a comic part, is not deſcribing him, but only deſcribing the characters he repreſents, and uſing the ſame ſtrokes and colours which he is obliged to uſe in the ſeveral pictures of the ridiculous characters, which he copies after nature. But to imitate a comedian in ſerious parts, is deſcribing him by faults which are his own, as thoſe characters will not bear the ridiculous tone of voice, or the geſtures by which he is known again.

Moliere. What you ſay is right, but I have rea-

sons for not doing it: between us, I did not think it worth the trouble, and the time it would take to execute that idea. I have not been able to see them above three or four times since we came to Paris, as their days of playing are the same with ours; I should like to study them, to make portraits in imitation of them; I got nothing of their manner of acting but what was obvious to the eye.

Mrs. Du Parc. From your description of them, I have discovered some resemblances of them.

Mrs. De Brie. I never heard this spoken of.

Moliere. I once thought of it, but have given it up, as an impertinent thing, and a trifle, that would not divert people.

Mrs. De Brie. Tell me a little of it, as you have told it to other people.

Moliere. We have not time now.

Mrs. De Brie. Only in a few words.

Moliere. I once thought of a comedy, in which there should be a poet, whom I would have represented myself, who should come to offer a piece to a company of comedians just come from the country: he should have said, have you actors and actresses capable of setting off such a piece, for it is an extraordinary one? and the comedian should have answered, Ah! Sir, we have men and women, who have been looked upon as pretty good performers in all the places we have been in. And who plays the king among you? There is one who sometimes performs it. Is it that fine shaped young man? You are certainly in banter! You should have a man that is very fat, and four-square for a king. 'Sdeath a king that's stuffed as he should be. A king of a great size, that can fill a throne genteelly. A fine-shaped king indeed! This is one grand fault

already; but let me hear him repeat a dozen verſes. Upon which the comedian ſhould have repeated, for example, ſome verſes of the king of Nicomedia,

Shall I tell thee, Araſpes? He has been too faithful to me;
My force encreaſing———

the moſt naturally that he poſſibly could. Then the poet: What, do you call that repeating? ſure you are not in earneſt; you ſhould ſpeak things emphatically. Hearken to me.

[Imitating Monſieury, a celebrated actor of the Hotel de Bourgogne.

Shall I tell thee, &c ——

Obſerve well this poſture; There, lay a ſtreſs as you ought on the laſt verſe; that is what gains approbation, and raiſes a clap. But, Sir, the comedian ſhould have replied, Methinks a king who is diſcourſing with the captain of his guards, ſpeaks a little more humanely, and ſcarce makes uſe of this deviliſh tone. You do not underſtand it. Go and ſpeak as you do, you will ſee if you will get the leaſt applauſe. Ah, let us try a ſcene of a lover and his miſtreſs. Upon which an actor and actreſs ſhould have played a ſcene together, which is that of Camilla and Curiatius,

Doſt go, dear ſoul, and does this fatal honour
Pleaſe thee at the expence of all our welfare?

Too well I ſee, alas! &c.

like the other, and as naturally as he was able. Then the poet immediately: You jeſt ſure; you do not repeat it properly, it ought to be thus.

[Imitating Mrs. Beauchateau, a player of the Hotel de Bourgogne.

Doſt go, dear ſoul, &c.

No, I know thee better, &c.

Observe how passionate and natural this is. Admire this smiling countenance which she preserves in the deepest affliction. In short, this is the design; and he should have run over all the players in this manner.

Mrs. De Brie. I think the design very humorous, and I knew some of them by the very first verses. Pray continue.

Moliere, imitating Beauchateau, a comedian of the Hotel de Bourgogne, in some lines of the Cid.]

Pierced to the bottom of my heart, &c.

And do you know this man in the Pompey of Sertorius?

[Imitating Hauteroche, a comedian of the Hotel de Bourgogne.

The enmity which reigns between both parties
Yields there no honour, &c.

Mrs. De Brie. I believe I am a little acquainted with him.

Moliere. And this?

[Imitating De Villiers, a comedian of the Hotel de Bourgogne.

Lord Polibore is dead, &c.

Mrs. De Brie. Yes, I know who he is; but there are some amongst them, I believe, that you would find it difficult to mimic.

Moliere. O! there is not one of them but what may be caught in some place or other, if I had studied them well: but you make us lose time, which is precious to us. But pray let us mind our play, and not amuse ourselves any more with talking. [To La Grange.] Do you take care to play your part of Marquis well with me.

Mrs. Moliere. Constantly marquisses.

Moliere. Yes, always marquiſſes: What the duce would you have one take for an agreeable character for the ſtage? The Marquis now-a-days is the jeſt of the comedy; and as in all antient comedies there was always a buffoon ſervant that made the audience laugh, ſo in all our pieces now there muſt be always a ridiculous Marquis to divert the company.

Mrs. Bejart. It it true, that cannot be omitted.

Moliere. For you, madam———

Mrs. Du Parc. You may by aſſured that I will acquit myſelf very ill of my character, it is too ceremonious for me.

Moliere. Alas! madam, this is what you ſaid when you had that given you in the School for Wives Criticiſed, yet you performed it extremely well, as every one ſaid who ſaw you do it. Believe me, this will be the ſame, and you will play it better than you imagine.

Mrs. Du Parc. How can that be? for there is not a leſs ceremonious perſon in the world than I am.

Moliere. You really are ſo; but by repreſenting a character well ſo contrary to your humour ſhews your great abilities as an actreſs. Endeavour then, all of you, to take the character of your parts right, and to imagine that you are what you repreſent. [To Du Croiſy.] Your part is that of a poet, and you ought to fill yourſelf with that character, to mark the pedant air which he preſerves even in the converſation of the beau monde; that ſententious tone of voice, and that exactneſs of pronunciation which lays a ſtreſs on all the ſyllables, and does not let one letter eſcape of the ſtricteſt orthography. [To Brecourt.] As for you, you play

a courtier, as you have already done in the School for Wives Criticiſed; that is, you muſt aſſume a ſedate air, a natural tone of voice, and make very few geſtures. [To La Grange.] As for you, I have nothing to ſay to you. [To Mrs. Bejart.] You repreſent one of thoſe women who, provided they do not make love, think that every thing elſe is permitted them; thoſe women who are always fiercely intrenched in their prudery, look deſpicably upon every body, and think all the good qualities that others poſſeſs are nothing in compariſon of a wretched honour which every one diſregards. Have this character always before your eyes, that you make the grimaces of it right. [To Mrs. De Brie.] As for you, you play one of thoſe women who imagine they are the moſt virtuous perſons in the world, provided they ſave appearances; thoſe women who think the crime lies only in the ſcandal; who would carry on the affairs they have quietly on the foot of an honourable attachment, and call thoſe friends whom other people call gallants. Enter ſpiritedly into this character. [To Ms. Moliere.] You play the ſame character as in the Criticiſm, I have nothing to ſay to you any more than to Mrs. Du Parc. [To Mrs. Croiſy.] As for you, you repreſent one of thoſe perſons who are ſweetly charitable to all the world, thoſe women who ſpeak contemptibly of all, and would be very ſorry if they ſuffered their neighbour to be praiſed. I believe you will perform this part very well. [To Mrs. Hervey.] And for you, you are a conceited Abigail, who is always thruſting herſelf into converſation, and catching as many of her miſtreſs's terms as poſſible. I tell you all your characters, that you may imprint them ſtrongly in your minds.

Let us begin to repeat, and see how it will do. Oh, here is what we wanted, a curious impertinent.

SCENE II.

TORRILLIERE, MOLIERE, BRECOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BEJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVEY.

TORRILLIERE.

GOOD-MORROW, Mr. Moliere.

Moliere. Sir, your servant. [Aside.] The duce take the fellow!

Torrilliere. How goes it?

Moliere. Very well, at your service. [To the actresses.] Ladies, do not———

Torrilliere. I come from a place where I have been saying a vast number of fine things of you.

Moliere. I am obliged to you. [Aside.] Plague take thee! [To the actors.] Have a little care—

Torrilliere. You play a new piece to-day, do you?

Moliere. Yes, Sir. [To the actresses.] Do not forget———

Torrilliere. The king obliges you to do it, hey?

Moliere. Yes, Sir. [To the actors.] Pray remember to———

Torrilliere. What do you call it?

Moliere. Yes, Sir.

Torrilliere. I ask what you call it.

Moliere. Why really I do not know. [To the actresses.] If you please you must———

Torrilliere. In what manner shall you be dressed?

Moliere. Juſt as we are now. [To the actors.] Pray now——

Torrilliere. When do you begin?

Moliere. When the king comes. [Aſide.] Duce take the queſtion-monger!

Torrilliere. When do you think he will come?

Moliere. Indeed, Sir, I do not know.

Torrilliere. Do not you know———

Moliere. Look you, Sir, I am the moſt ignorant man in the world, I know nothing of whatever you may aſk me I proteſt to you. [Aſide.] I am mad, this troubleſome fop comes with an air of tranquillity aſking one queſtions, and never conſiders that one has other things in one's head.

Torrilliere. Ladies, your ſervant.

Moliere. Good. Now he is got on the other ſide.

Torrilliere to Mrs Croiſy.] You are as lovely as a little angel. Do you play, both of you, to-day?

[Looking on Mrs. Hervey.

Mrs. Croiſy. Yes, Sir.

Torrilliere. The comedy would be very little worth if you had not a part in it.

Moliere whiſpering the actreſſes.] Will not you ſend that man there a-going?

Mrs. De Brie to Torrilliere.] Sir, we have ſomething to repeat together.

Torrilliere. Pray do not be hindered by me. You having to do but go on.

Mrs. De Brie. But———

Torrilliere. No, no, I ſhould be very ſorry to diſturb any body; do freely what you have to do.

Mrs. De Brie. Yes, but——

Torrilliere. I am a man of no ceremony, I tell you, and you may repeat any thing you chuſe.

Moliere. Sir, theſe ladies are unwilling to tell you, that they could wiſh no body were here, during this rehearſal.

Torrilliere. Why? there is no danger as to me.

Moliere. Sir, it is a cuſtom which they obſerve, and you will be more delighted when things ſurprize you.

Torrilliere. I will go let them know then that you are ready.

Moliere. Pray do not be in ſuch a hurry, Sir.

SCENE III.

MOLIERE, BRECOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BEJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVEY.

MOLIERE.

WHAT a vaſt number of impertinents there are in the world! Well, come, let us begin. Firſt then imagine that the ſcene is in the king's anti-chamber, for that is a place where witty things enough daily paſs. It is eaſy to bring there all the perſons we have a mind to, and we may even find reaſons to warrant the coming in of the women which I introduce. The comedy begins with two marquiſſes meeting each other. [To La Grange.] Remember you to come as I told you, there, with that air which is called the Bel Air, combing your peruke, and humming a tune between your teeth. Fal lal de rol lol lol. Do you range yourſelves then, for the two marquiſſes

muſt have room, they are not people to be contained in a little bounds. [To La Grange.] Come, ſpeak.

La Grange. "Good-morrow, marquis."

Moliere. Alas! marquiſſes do not ſpeak in that tone; you muſt take it a little higher, the moſt part of theſe gentlemen affect a particular manner of ſpeaking, to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the vulgar. *Good-morrow, Marquis.* Begin again.

La Grange. "Good-morrow, Marquis.

Moliere. "Hah! Marquis, your ſervant."

La Grange. "What doſt thou do here?"

Moliere. "'Sdeath! you ſee I wait till all theſe "gentlemen have unſtopped the door to ſhew my "face there."

La Grange. "What a prodigious croud there "is! I do not care to thruſt my noſe in amongſt "them, and had much rather be laſt in going in."

Moliere. "There are twenty people who are "certain they will not get in, and yet will not "forbear crouding and taking up all the avenues "of the gate."

La Grange. "Let us bawl out both our names "to the porter, that he may call us in."

Moliere. "That is well enough for thee, but for "my part I will not be played by Moliere."

La Grange. "However, marquis, I think it "was you he played in his Criticiſm."

Moliere. "I! you are very much miſtaken, it "was yourſelf."

La Grange. "Hah! faith you are good enough "to apply your own character to me."

Moliere. "I'gad, you are a pleaſant mortal, to "give to me what belongs to yourſelf."

La Grange laughing.] "Ha, ha, ha! that is "drole."

Moliere laughing.] "Ha, ha, ha! that is comi- "cal."

La Grange. "What! you will maintain that it "is not you that is played in the character of the "marquis in the School for Wives Criticiſed."

Moliere. "It is true; it is I. *Deteſtable, 'ſdeath! "deteſtable, cream-tart.* It is I, it is I, it is cer- "tainly no one elſe."

La Grange. "Yes, i'gad, it is you, you have no "need to rally; and if you will, we will lay a wa- "ger, and ſee which of us is in the wrong."

Moliere. "And what will you lay?"

La Grange. "I will lay an hundred piſtoles that "it is you."

Moliere. "And I, an hundred piſtoles that it "is you."

La Grange. "A hundred piſtoles down."

Moliere. "Down. Ninety piſtoles upon A- "myntas, and ten piſtoles down."

La Grange. "I will."

Moliere. "It is done."

La Grange. "Your money runs a great riſque."

Moliere. "Your's is well ventured."

La Grange. "Who ſhall determine it?"

Moliere to Brecourt.] "Here is a man that "ſhall judge us. Chevalier."

Brecourt. "What?"

Moliere. So, there is another takes the tone of a marquis. Did not I tell you that you played a part wherein you ſhould ſpeak naturally?

Brecourt. True.

Moliere. Come then. "Chevalier?"

Brecourt. "What?"

Moliere. "Judge between us on a wager we "have laid."

Brecourt. "And what is it?"

Moliere. "We dispute who is the marquis of" Moliere's Criticism; "he says it is me, and I say "it is him."

Brecourt. "And I judge that it is neither "of you; you are both fools to apply such things "to yourselves; and this is what I heard Mo- "liere complain of the other day, speaking to "persons who charged him with the same thing "that you do. He said that nothing displeased "him so much as being accused of having an eye "to some particular persons in the pictures he draws: "that his design is to paint the manners, without "touching the person; and that all the characters "he represents are airy characters, and properly "phantoms, which he dresses according to his fan- "cy to please the spectators; that he should be "very sorry if he had marked any body in them; "and that if any thing was capable of disgusting "him against writing comedies, it was the resem- "blances which people will always find in them, "and the notion which his enemies maliciously "endeavour to keep up, to do him ill offices with "some people whom he never thought of. And "indeed I find he is in the right; for why pray "should people apply all his gestures and all his "words, and endeavour to bring him into quar- "rels by saying openly, he plays such a one, when "they are things which may fit a hundred persons? "As the main design of comedy is to represent in "general all the imperfections of men, and prin- "cipally of the men of our age, it is impossible "for Moliere to write any character which will "not hit some one or other; and if he must be ac-

" cuſed of having aimed at all the perſons in whom " the faults he deſcribes are to be found, he muſt " certainly give over writing comedies."

Moliere. " Faith, Chevalier, you have a mind " to juſtify" Moliere, " and ſpare our friend there."

La Grange. " Not at all; it is you he ſpares, " and we will get other judges."

Moliere. "Be it ſo. But, Chevalier, do not you " think, that your Moliere is exhauſted now, and " that he will find no more matter for——

Brecourt. " More matter? Ah dear marquis, we " ſhall always furniſh him with enough, and we " do not take the way to grow wiſer for all that " he does, and all that he ſays."

Moliere. Stay. You muſt mark all this paſſage more. Here me ſpeak it——" And that he will " find no more matter for——more matter? Ah! " dear Marquis, we ſhall always furniſh him with " enough; and every thing that he does and ſays " never makes us wiſer. Do you think he has " exhauſted in his comedies all the ridicule of man- " kind? And, without going from court, has he " not ſtill twenty characters of people he has not " yet touched upon? Has he not for example " thoſe who profeſs the greateſt friendſhip in the " world, and who, as ſoon as their backs are turn- " ed, eſteem it a piece of gallantry to tear one ano- " ther in pieces? Has he not thoſe egregious ſyco- " phants, thoſe inſipid flatterers, who do not ſea- " ſon with the leaſt ſalt the praiſes they beſtow, " and all whoſe flatteries have a fulſomeneſs which " makes thoſe that hear them ſick at heart? Has he " not thoſe baſe occaſional courtiers, thoſe perfi- " dious adorers of fortune, who praiſe you in pro- " ſperity and run you down in adverſity? Has he

" not thoſe who are always diſcontent with the " court, thoſe uſeleſs attendants, thoſe trouble- " ſome aſſiduous creatures, thoſe people I ſay who " can only reckon their importunities for ſervices, " and who expect a reward for having beſieged the " king ten years running? Has he not thoſe who " equally careſs every body, who hand round their " civilities from right to left, and run to all they " ſee with the ſame embraces, and the ſame pro- " teſtations of friendſhip? Sir, your moſt obedient " humble ſervant; Sir, I am entirely devoted to " you. Reckon me amongſt yours, my dear." " Eſteem me, Sir, as the warmeſt of your friends. " Sir, I am delighted to ſee you. Do me the fa- " vour to employ me, be perſuaded that I am en- " tirely yours. You are the man of all the world " I eſteem the moſt; there is nobody I honour e- " qual to you; I beſeech you to believe it; I con- " jure you not to doubt it; your ſervant, moſt " humble ſlave. Go, go, marquis, Moliere will " always have more ſubjects than he deſires, and " every thing that he has touched upon hitherto " is but a trifle in compariſon of what remains." This ſhould be played in this manner.

Brecourt. Enough.

Moliere. Continue.

Brecourt. " Here is Climene and Eliza."

Moliere to Mrs. Du Parc and Mrs. Moliere.] Upon which you two are to come. [To Mrs. Du Parc.] Do you take care to make grimaces as you ought, and to be very ceremonious. This will be a little conſtraint upon you, but we muſt ſometimes do ſo.

Mrs. Moliere. "Certainly, madam, I knew you

" a great way off, and ſaw plainly by your air that " it could be nobody but you.

Mrs. Du Parc. " I am come to wait here, do " you ſee, till a man comes out with whom I have " ſome buſineſs."

Mrs. Moliere. " And ſo am I."

Moliere. " Ladies, theſe trunks will ſerve you " for elbow chairs."

Mrs. Du Parc. Come, madam, pray take " your place."

Mrs. Moliere. " After you, madam."

Moliere. Very well. After theſe little dumb ceremonies, let every one take their place and ſpeak ſitting, except the marquiſſes, who muſt ſometimes ſit and ſometimes ſtand, according to their mutual reſtleſſneſs. " 'Sdeath, Chevalier, you ought " to give your rowlers phyſic."

Brecourt. " How?"

Moliere. " They are very bad."

Brecourt. " Your punſter's ſervant."

Mrs. Moliere. " Lard! madam, I think your " complexion is of a dazling whiteneſs, and your " lips of an amazing flame-colour.

Mrs. Du Parc. " Ah! What do you ſay, ma- " dam? Do not look at me, I am very ugly to-day.

Mrs. Moliere. " Lift up your hood a little, ma- " dam, if you pleaſe.

Mrs. Du Parc. " Fie! I am quite ſhocking, I " tell you, and quite frighten myſelf."

Mrs. Moliere. " You are ſo beautiful!"

Mrs. Du Parc. " No, no."

Mrs. Moliere. " Shew yourſelf."

Mrs. Du Parc. " Oh! pray do not."

Mrs. Moliere. " Pray now."

Mrs. Du Parc. " Lard! no."

Mrs. Moliere. " Yes, do."

Mrs. Du Parc. " You vex me."

Mrs. Moliere. " One moment."

Mrs. Du Parc. " Ah!"

Mrs Moliere. " Positively you shall shew your-
" self, we cannot bear not to see you."

Mrs. Du Parc. " Lard! What a strange person
" you are! you are furiously set upon what you have
" a mind to."

Mrs. Moliere. " Ah! madam, I will swear you
" have no disadvantage in appearing in full light.
" How cruel people are, who say that you lay on
" something! Truly, I shall now be able to disprove
" them."

Mrs. Du Parc. " Alas! I do not so much as know
" what they call laying on something. But where
" are these ladies going?"

Mrs. De Brie. " Allow us, ladies, to tell you,
" by the bye, the most agreeable news in the
" world. There is Mr. Lysidas come to let us
" know, that there is a play made against Mo-
" liere, which is to be performed by the grand
" comedians."

Moliere. " It is true, they would have read it
" to me, and it is one called Br—Brou—Brouf-
" saut that made it."

Du Croisy. " Sir, it is posted up under the
" name of Boursalt; but to tell you the secret,
" several people have set their hand to this work,
" and a pretty high expectation ought to be con-
" ceived of it. As all the authors and all the co-
" medians look on Moliere as their greatest ene-
" my, we are all united to do him a disservice;
" every one of us has given a stroke of the pencil
" to his picture, but we take care not to put our

" names to it: It would have been too glorious " for him to ſink in the eyes of the world, under " the efforts of all Parnaſſus; and to renderhis de- " feat more ignominious, we have choſen an author " without reputation on purpoſe."

Mrs. Du Parc. " For my part, I own to you, " that it gives megreat delight."

Moliere. " I am glad at it too. Pgad the jeſt- " er ſhall be jeſted on, he ſhall be under the claw " i'faith."

Mrs. Du Parc. " That will teach him to ſati- " rize every body. What? would the impertinent " fellow have us women to be deſtitute of wit? " does he condemn all our elevated expreſſions, " and pretend that we ſhould never talk in any " but a low ſtyle?"

Mrs. De Brie. " Language is nothing; but he " cenſures all our attachments, however innocent " they may be, and according to his way of talk- " ing, it is being criminal to have merit."

Mrs. Du Croiſy. "That is inſupportable; there " is no woman can do any thing for the future. " What buſineſs has he to diſturb our huſbands, " and, by opening their eyes, make them perceive " things they never thought of?"

Mrs. Bejart. " All that is not worth minding, " but he even ſatirizes virtuous women, and this " wicked buffoon calls them virtuous ſhe-devils."

Mrs. Moliere. " It is an impertinent mortal, he " ought to have his pennyworth of it."

Du Croiſy. " The repreſentation of this come- " dy, madam, will have need of being ſupported, " and the comedians of the hotel"———

Mrs. Du Parc. " They need not be in the leaſt

" fear about their piece, I will venture my life on " the success of it.

Mrs. Moliere. You are in the right, madam, " too many people are concerned to think it good. " I will leave you to imagine if all those who think " themselves satirized by Moliere will not take " the opportunity to be revenged on him by ap- " plauding this comedy."

Brecourt ironically.] " Certainly, and for my " part I can answer for twelve marquisses, six ro- " mantic ladies, twenty coquettes, and thirty cuck- " olds, who will not fail to clap it."

Mrs. Moliere. Really. What is the reason that " he offends all these persons, and particularly " cuckolds, who are the best people in the world ?"

Moliere. " By the stars, I am told that they will " pay off both him and all his comedies in a hand- " some manner, and that all his comedians and " authors, from the cedar to the hyssop, are devil- " ishly animated against him."

Mrs. Moliere. " It will fit him but right. Why " does he write odious pieces which all Paris go " to see, and wherein he describes people so well " that every body knows themselves in them? Why " does not he compose comedies like those of Mr. " Lysidas? he would have nobody against him, " and all the authors would speak well of it. It " is true that such plays have not that great con- " course of people; but in return they are always " well written, nobody writes against them, and " all those that see them are extremely desirous to " think them good."

Du Croisy. " It is true, I have the advantage of " not making myself enemies, and of having all " my works approved of by the learned."

Mrs. Moliere. "You do well to be satisfied "with yourself. That is worth more than all the "applauses of the public, and than all the money "which may be got by Moliere's pieces. What "matter is it to you whether people come to "your plays, provided they are approved of by "the gentlemen your brethren?"

La Grange. "But when do they perform the "Painter's Picture?"

Du Croisy. "I do not know, but I shall be in "the utmost readiness to appear in the first row "to clap it."

Moliere. "And so shall I."

La Grange. "And I likewise, as I hope to be "saved."

Mrs. Du Parc. "For my part, I will shew my-"self a woman there as I ought, and answer for "a bravery of approbation, which shall rout all "the adverse judges; it is really the least thing "we ought to do, to support with our praises the "revenger of our interests."

Mrs. Moliere. "It is well said."

Mrs. De Brie. "And what we all must do."

Mrs. Bejart. "Certainly."

Mrs. Du Croisy. "Undoubtedly."

Mrs. Hervey. "No quarter to this mimicker of "people."

Moliere. "I'faith, friend Chevalier, your Mo-"liere must conceal himself."

Brecourt. "Who, he? I promise you, marquis, "he intends to go upon the stage to laugh with "all the others at the picture they have drawn of "him."

Moliere. "I'gad, it will be on the wrong side "of his face that he will laugh then."

Brecourt. Come, come, perhaps he will find " more cauſe to laugh than you imagine: I was " ſhewed the piece, and as every thing that is a- " greeable in it are actually the thoughts that were " taken from Moliere, the joy which that may " give will undoubtedly have no reaſon to diſ- " pleaſe him: for as to the part where they en- " deavour to blacken him, I am the moſt deceiv- " ved in the world if any one approve of it. And " as to all the people whom they have ſtrove to " animate againſt him, becauſe he makes too " great reſemblances they ſay in his pieces, beſides " that it has an ill look, I never ſaw any thing " more fooliſh, or worſe taken, and I never yet " thought that a comedian ought to be blamed for " deſcribing men too juſtly."

La Grange. " The comedians told me they ex- " pected an anſwer from him, and that———"

Brecourt. " An anſwer! faith I ſhould think " him a great fool if he took the pains to anſwer " their invectives. Every body very well knows " from what motive they proceed, and the beſt an- " ſwer he can make them is a comedy that may " ſucceed like all his others. That is the true " way of being revenged on them as he ought; " and of the humour I know them to be, I am " well aſſured that a new piece, which may take " away people from theirs, would vex them more " than all the ſatires that can be made on their " perſons."

Moliere. " But, Chevalier———"

Mrs. Bejart. Let me interrupt the rehearſal a little. [To Moliere.] Allow me to tell you, if I had been in your place I would have carried things otherwiſe. Every one expects a vigorous anſwer

from you, and after the manner they tell me that you are treated in this comedy, you ought in juſtice to ſay every thing againſt the comedians, and not to ſpare one of them.

Moliere. Your talking thus provokes me, and this is the madneſs peculiar to you women; you would have me take fire at once againſt them, and after their example go and break out immediately into invectives and abuſes. A vaſt deal of honour I ſhould get by it, and a great deal of vexation I ſhould give them! Are not they readily prepared for ſuch ſort of things, and when they are deliberating if they ſhould play the Painter's Picture for fear of an anſwer, did not ſome amongſt them anſwer, let him abuſe us as much as he will, provided we can get money? Is not that the mark of a ſoul very ſenſible of ſhame, and ſhall not I be well revenged of them by giving them what they are willing to receive.

Mrs. De Brie. Yet they complained much of three or four words which you ſaid of them in your Criticiſm, and Romantic Ladies.

Moliere. It is true, thoſe three or four words are very offenſive, and they have great reaſon to quote them. Go, go, it is not that; I have done them no prejudice, only I was ſo fortunate as to pleaſe more than they wiſhed I ſhould. They ridicule my pieces, which I am glad they do; I would not wiſh to write one to pleaſe them, it would not be for my benefit; the whole of their proceedings ſince we came to Paris, ſhews plainly what affects them; but they may do their worſt, it ſhall give me no uneaſineſs.

Mrs. De Brie. However, there certainly can be no pleaſure in ſeeing our writings taken to pieces.

Moliere. As I have got all I wished by my comedy, it is of no consequence to me; as I have had the happiness of pleasing their majesties, whom I make it my study to please, I may be content with its fortune; all other reflections are of no consequence to me. Now, it is attacking the judgment of persons who approved my piece, rather than the writer of it.

Mrs. De Brie. Upon my word, I would play off the little Monsieur Author, who attacks people that do not trouble themselves about him.

Moliere. What a fool you are! Mr. Boursault would have been a fine subject to divert the court indeed! I would like to know how they would fit him out to make him amuse them; and were he to be criticised upon the stage, he would be so happy as to make people laugh. To be played before an august assembly would be doing him too much honour, and that is all he could wish for: he attacks me chearfully, on purpose that people may know him. As he can lose nothing, he is set up against me by the comedians with an intention to engage me in a silly quarrel, and to divert my time from my other writings, by that foolish artifice, and you are silly enough to be caught by their snare; but I am determined to declare publickly upon this point, to all their criticisms, that I will make no reply; let them take my writings to pieces as much as they please, I shall not differ with them for that; they may new-make them after us, if they chuse it, and bring them upon their stage, and if they will be satisfied with what I can conveniently spare them, I will gladly contribute to their support, by their using my pieces. But there should be bounds set to civility; some things will

not create a laugh either to the perſon of whom they are ſpoken, or the ſpectators. I freely give to them my works, figure, geſture, tone of voice, and manner of reciting, to ſay and do what they pleaſe with; if they are of any benefit to them, I will chearfully allow all this, and will be pleaſed if it be ſerviceable to them. But when I am ſo civil as to give up ſo much, they ſhould favour me with the reſt, and not attack me in ſuch things as I am told they do. This is all I requeſt of the good gentleman who writes for them, and they will get no other anſwer from me.

Mrs. Bejart. But really——

Moliere. Really you would make a fool of me. We divert ourſelves with talking, inſtead of rehearſing our play; let us therefore talk no more, but go on. I have forgot whereabouts we were.

Mrs. De Brie. You were at the paſſage juſt now——

Moliere. Bleſs me! the king is certainly come, for I hear a noiſe, and now we have not time to go through it. You ſee how fooliſh it is to trifle away time! You muſt even do as well as you can for the reſt.

Mrs. Bejart. But upon my word, I am afraid, and cannot play till I have rehearſed it all.

Moliere. How! Cannot you play your part?

Mrs Bejart. No.

Mrs. Du Parc. Nor I mine.

Mrs. de Brie. Nor I neither.

Mrs. Moliere. Nor I.

Mrs Hervey. Nor can I.

Mrs. Du Croiſy. Nor I.

Moliere. Do you all make a jeſt of me? What do you intend to do?

SCENE IV.

BEJART, MOLIERE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BEJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVEY.

BEJART.

GENTLEMEN, I am come to acquaint you, that the king is come, and waits for you to begin the play.

Moliere. Oh! Sir, I am distracted just now, the women are afraid they cannot play, and tell me they must rehearse it before they begin. The king is good, he must favour us with a moment longer, he is sensible it was done in a hurry.

SCENE V.

MOLIERE, and the same actors, except Bejart.

MOLIERE.

PRAY do endeavour to recover yourselves; I beg you will take courage.

Mrs. Du Parc. You should go and excuse yourself.

Moliere. How can I excuse myself?

SCENE VI.

MOLIERE, and the same actors, A BUSY-BODY.

A BUSY-BODY.

GENTLEMEN, begin.

Moliere. In a little, Sir. I believe I shall go mad in this business, and——

SCENE VII.

MOLIERE, and the same actors, A SECOND BUSY-BODY.

A SECOND BUSY-BODY.

GENTLEMEN, begin.

Moliere. This minute, Sir. [To his companions.] Can I have the assurance——

SCENE VIII.

MOLIERE, and the same actors, A THIRD BUSY-BODY.

A THIRD BUSY-BODY.

GENTLEMEN, begin.

Moliere. Sir we are just going to begin. How busy these people are to come and desire us to begin, when the king did not send them to do it!

SCENE IX.

MOLIERE, and the same actors, A FOURTH BUSY-BODY.

A FOURTH BUSY-BODY.

GENTLEMEN, begin.

Moliere. Yes, Sir. What then! shall I have the confusion———

SCENE THE LAST.

BEJART, MOLIERE, and the same actors.

MOLIERE.

SIR, you are come to desire us to begin, but—

Bejart. No, gentlemen, I come to inform you that the king has been told of the confusion you are in, and will, in his goodness, take any comedy now, and have the new one afterwards, when they are all more perfect.

Moliere. Sir, you transport me with joy; the king has done us an exceeding great favour, by giving us time, and we will go and return him thanks for his goodness.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

This book is DUE on the last
date stamped below

RECEIVED
MAIN
GRADUATE RESERVE SERVICE

LD-URL MAR 2 1965
RECEIVED
MAIN LOAN DESK
FEB 23 1965
A.M.
7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6
P.M.
REC'D URL-LD
LD-URL JUL 20 1967
JUL 8
DISCHARGE-URL
URL MAR 21 1979
MAR 8 1979

2m-6,'52(A1855)470

3 1158 00448 3128

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

A 000 006 364 4